GOALS AND GUERDONS:

OR,

THE CHRONICLES OF A LIFE.

BY

A VERY OLD LADY.

There's a divinity doth shape our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."
SHAKSPERE

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
CHARLES OLLIER,
SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND.
1848.

GOALS AND GUERDONS:

OR,

THE CHRONICLES OF A LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

> "This let me hope, that when to public view
> I bring my pictures—men may feel them true."
>
> CRABBE.

A THOUSAND beauties surrounding the home of Beverley Dentnoris, were the objects of Lady Wilverton's contemplation, as she turned from her favourite bay window, surprised by the ejaculation of her brother, who at the moment was eagerly unfolding a huge ship letter, bearing the previous day's post-mark from Deal.

"Marianne," exclaimed the Rector, "this letter announces the arrival of 'The Ocean's Bride,' 20 days before she was expected. The children are well, and I must be in town by twelve o'clock to-morrow morning."

"Indeed! how glad I am! They will find some few weeks of summer left ere the chilly autumn comes to wither all our flowers, Beverley. Are they nice children? As much worth loving as their brother?" observed the Aunt, betrayed into unusual vivacity. "How Harold will lament his own absence, and envy us our joy!"

"The thoughts which occupy my mind rather trouble than delight me, Marianne. I am not addicted to superstitious misgivings, yet this hurried note from the captain of the vessel, unaccompanied by a letter from Lord Dentnoris, puzzles me amazingly, and gives a sort of importance to the trifling nonsense conveyed to us through the medium of that sad traitor, Arthur;—but how absurd to allow

these melancholy presentiments to waste the brief moments left for preparation before my journey! It was thus our forefathers conjured up ghosts and goblins; pray let us deprecate a return to the ancient horrors of demonology and witchcraft. I assure you, Marianne, the discussions awaiting us at the breakfast table seem infinitely more inviting. Come, the urn hisses louder than ever to remind a forgetful mistress of its presence; quick then, Marianne, and do not discard your old speculations relating to tea and sugar, for the sake of new cares in prospective."

"It is not probable I shall forget that I hold the enviable post of tea-maker to the Rector of Landsworth, who certainly may boast of a few praiseworthy contrivances for rendering the task no sinecure," added Lady Wilverton, playfully.

Breakfast over, the passing "stage" was hailed, the uncle departed, and, with a thoughtful heart, the graceful widow sought the cool

shade of the garden, and amidst the growing luxuriance of wild and partially cultured trees, encouraged the returning memories of by-gone years, thence attempting to form the picture of her new and juvenile guests.

The morning's announcement had awakened Lady Wilverton to reminiscences long unreferred to; and almost a painful regret followed the wonder with which she confessed how calm a dream had succeeded to the suffering of intense horror—how soon she had overcome the engrossing lessons taught in loneliness and vicissitude.

These musings were at length interrupted by the importunate domestics, who, busy with the minor preparations requisite for the children, and fancying, from the anticipated addition to the family circle, that each acquired some new prerogative, overwhelmed their meditative mistress by a catalogue of inquiries and applications connected with the future whereabout of the little visitors,—whether the

suite of rooms occupied by Mr. Harold would not better answer the purpose of a nursery, &c.

Thus time wore on, and the fourth evening arrived, bright and glorious in the beams of a red departing sun.

Landsworth Rectory was romantically situated on the rising brow of a hill, sloping over a magnificent valley. A stream of clearest blue glided through the gardens into the lake below; clusters of coloured wild-flowers strewed the margin of its glistening bed, while the long lane-like avenue of ash, laburnum, roses, lilac, and sweet briar, was left half neglected in its wilderness of sweet blossoms, in the rich fulness of their summer bloom.

On the south side, the fine old gates opened to the "Oak Road," as the double grove of noble trees was usually designated; and, indeed, the whole scene told of that sublime first cause —the great Creator.

The golden king of the western sky sank gorgeously behind the Manor House, throwing

out the antique home of Dentnoris into the grassy-terraced foreground. There was no cloud upon that scene to tell of life's decaying joyfulness, no gloom to warn the sanguine mind of winter's sure return, and with it the certain withering of the living landscape around, the fading of warm tints so mysteriously splendid in their combined refulgence. Even from the field-flowers Hope and Happiness laughed forth, while blithe birds carolled in the merry-looking branches of the well-filled orchard.

"And will Aunt Marianne look grave, and very proud?" asked a clear young voice, arousing Lady Wilverton from her dreamy watching of the entrance to the avenue.

"Neither grave, nor proud, my boy; but here she comes to answer for herself."

"Oh! how pretty she is," exclaimed Sarah. "See, our aunt *is* pretty."

A quiet smile of melancholy affirmation served for the boy's reply, as the merry girl

approached her aunt, fearless and caressingly.

"See, our aunt *is* pretty!" lingered in the memory of Lady Wilverton, and she longed for an interpretation of the singular emphasis.

George Dentnoris, unlike his elder brother, was not a handsome boy, but his look and bearing betokened high descent, with a countenance ever varying with emotions of successive thought, as if struggling to conceal an overpowering recollection of recent sorrow and alarm.

The fairy-like sister, his junior by four years, presented a cheerful contrast; long and golden curls flowed wantonly over her dazzling neck. Upon her uncle's arm hung the shawl she had discarded on entering the rectory grounds, and a cottage bonnet of white straw, with soft blue ribbons, shaded one of the prettiest blonde faces in the world. Eyes sparkling like drops of blue water, then subduing into childhood's thoughtfulness, the

dimpled cheek, and nose so slightly in the ascendant that one declared a preference for "*le nez retroussé*" instantly on seeing it; indeed, the contour of little Sarah Dentnoris was pronounced almost faultless by the most fastidious admirer of feminine loveliness.

They were noble-looking orphans; and Aunt Marianne felt how probable it was that her hope might be fulfilled, and her new charges prove as much worth loving as their brother. A succession of novelties quickly wearied the young travellers, and the deep sleep of profound forgetfulness, we fain trust, soothed the aching remembrance of the youthful sorrowers.

On descending the stairs, and still dwelling on the voices of the last "Good night," Lady Wilverton met her brother pale and dejected, and evidently burdened with any other than satisfactory intelligence.

A settled melancholy gaze was all that replied to her anxious questions as he led her to the drawing-room, where the dismal record

of a self-murdered cousin, Lord George Dentnoris, was to be revealed.

This fatal intelligence, so carelessly disclosed, so fearful in itself, and terrible to the minds of his children, wholly convulsed the kindly heart of Beverley Dentnoris; and, placing the manuscripts he had received from the hands of the nurse, Villiers, who had accompanied the children from India, in those of his sister, he fell back in an agony of suppressed emotion.

Marianne glanced over the characters of the letter, blotted by the tears of their lost cousin, and quickly recognised in the note wafered to the corner of the document, the well-known writing of her former favourite, Brook Emmersly. It was the first she read:—

"DEAR MR. DENTNORIS,

"Poor Lord George is no more. I only lament to add, he terminated a gentlemanly career by his own hand. And upon my honour there is so little worth living for in this valley

of darkness (our earth) that the sooner a man returns to his original clay the better, except that the 'something after death' makes one hesitate, and rather, &c. &c.

"I trust that essence of goodness, my Aunt Marianne, will hear this ill-starred episode in the advent of my Indian life with her usual most singular fortitude.

"I arrived on the night previous to the perpetration of the deed, and thought Lord Dentnoris looked absolutely gay. The next morning he wavered a good deal about the departure of the little ones, and at length became actually frantic in his grief.

"I prevailed on him to leave the few preliminary arrangements to their governess (Mrs. Delvor) and myself; he thanked me, and promised to be tranquil. He was so. Little Georgy's face, when I returned, bore the most startling impress of grief. I was alarmed, and but too soon saw the palpable reality.

"It was a harrowing event, and one which

should deter a man from suicide. Commend me to my gracious aunt, and consider me at all times, yours faithfully,

"B. E."

With tearful eyes, and her woman's heart all sadness, Lady Wilverton turned from the reckless expressions of her chosen nephew—her once so fondly cherished favourite, to the manuscript containing the final behest of Lord Dentnoris.

"I, Lord George Dentnoris, father of Harold, George, and Sarah Dentnoris, espoused the widow of an officer of the 60th Rifles. We were married in the church of * * *" (here follows an erasure). "Our marriage having taken place so immediately after the death of my wife's first husband, we considered it advisable to conceal the event for a time, as also the name of the village in which the rite was solemnized. The sequel, however, will clear the mystery. I have very recently learned some facts in which my legitimate son Harold's title

to the inheritance is involved, and to George in succession. Nor shall rife scandal ——"

"This abrupt conclusion to the sentence (continues Mr. Emmersly) prompts me to believe, that, called away by some new impulse, the writer forgot to refer again to this very important feature in the question of descent. I am not a clever historian, and cannot therefore enter more fully into the particulars of this catastrophe.

"You will see among the papers forwarded an attested statement, signifying that Harold should receive an additional five hundred per annum, and the younger children each three hundred.

"It seems a trifling sum to allow for their maintenance, considering the wind-falls Dentnoris has had lately; unless, indeed, he meditated self-annihilation, and entertained a few doubts as to the inheritance of the entailed property, independent of which he could, of course, afford the sum total.

"I conceive, from all I can learn, that Lord Dentnoris never wholly recovered from the dejection consequent on the loss of his beautiful wife. She died, as you may remember, in giving birth to the splendid girl, you, at the moment of perusing this, may have a better opportunity than myself of forming a judgment upon, seeing that the chances are ten to one she sits beside you.

"I never saw a man more valiantly suppress the tumult of his stubborn sorrow than our poor friend; and yet I am told that on the death of Lady Dentnoris, the very consolation of his beautiful children, which, I verily believe, might have imbued even my incorrigible self with virtuous resolutions, acted in a diametrically opposite ratio with their father.

"They say that, when the nurse presented the newly born infant, he absolutely shuddered, and, at times, vehemently apostrophised the innocent girl as her sainted mother's murderess; and as the child shrank in fear from the

gesticulations of her father, he would sternly trace the agonies of his dying wife in the look of terror from her offspring.

"The parting scene I give you in Mrs. Delvor's letter. Adieu.

"Yours faithfully,

"B. E.

"P.S. I met Harold at Munich. What pity he should hold no certain proof of his legitimacy!

"I always feared any painful allusion to that hurried union. I know not why, but a yearning desire to possess the certificate of their marriage has troubled my spirit for several years; my sorrow is, that I did not put the necessity for such a thing more clearly before Dentnoris."

"It is singular," said Lady Wilverton, with a heightened blush, "that Mr. Emmersly should interest himself in a matter so entirely unconnected with his concerns; he who usually evinces too idle a mind for any but his own peculiar amusements; and, methinks, a less

explicit history of poor George's failings would have proved him a more amiable historian."

"Ah! yes," murmured the Rector, "he is too reckless, and—Marianne, a new thought has struck me. Did the proud George Dentnoris admit Brook Emmersly to such intimate friendliness, so heartily despising the little knowledge he gained of his adventures—you remember his letter?"

"Perhaps Brook was the only gentleman near him at the moment in whom our unhappy cousin could dare to confide," rejoined Lady Wilverton.

"Perchance he was."

"Still," added the sister, proudly, "Mr. Emmersly might more delicately have worded his report, and at the same time supported his character for gentlemanly frankness, which last virtue, I lament to fear, originates in a latent unkind jealousy towards Harold, the mysteries of which have never yet been unravelled to us, Beverley."

"Exactly so; but his motive for annoying

you, Marianne, is inexplicable, and as unpardonable as wicked on any grounds."

"Shall I read this letter of Mrs. Delvor's?" asked the faltering voice of the widow, with a sigh so full of grief, that the Rector bitterly reproached himself for the utterance of even an indistinct allusion to his sister's sad disappointment.

"I will relieve you, my Marianne, and while you listen, remember, our God alone can dispense judgment, let weak mortals rail as their evil nature is prone to do. He also will redeem the guiltless. I vainly strive against a presentiment, which, despite my best endeavours, somehow attributes to Brook Emmersly a participation in feelings unworthy of him.

"He was and is a friend of Arthur Dentnoris; nevertheless, I indulge the firm conviction, that not only was the act of slaughter unpremeditated, but likewise that Harold's rights are unquestionable.

"Prior to reading Mr. Emmersly's disserta-

tion, I doubted many things; since the perusal of his remarks, my opinion has undergone a complete revulsion, unaccountable to myself, however very necessary in the furtherance of plans as yet imperfectly matured."

There was an impatience in the accents of the Rector, and sad fears rushed through the mind of his sister, compelling a thousand horrible fancies to shape themselves into words and sentences, till the beloved nephew of early days fell lower in the standard of her imagination, and the kindly Marianne reluctantly yielded to the universal opinion of his abandonment.

The following letter from Mrs. Delvor to Mr. Emmersly was then read, and found to contain the faithful, last sad account of their deceased relation:—

"Dear Sir,

"The children appear tolerably contented. The vessel sails this evening. Villiers is with them, and I really think she will fulfil her trust.

There is an air of superiority about her, which pleases me exceedingly. She is evidently an educated woman."

What caused the blush suffusing the brow of Brook Emmersly, as he read this eulogium on the woman engaged, upon the recommendation of an acquaintance, to take the orphans of Lord Dentnoris to England? She wore the Syrian garb, and her complexion was wholly Asiatic. Had her blue eye the look that disquieted him?

She certainly had been beautiful, but the swarthy hue of her neck and face seemed of an unnatural colour, and in his presence she had not spoken.

The children evidently looked confidingly on the benevolent beaming of her expressive eyes; then why alone Brook Emmersly dared not meet them the sequel of our tale shall tell. We will now continue the letter, which ran thus:—

"The man-servant, notwithstanding your description of his fidelity, seems a less pleasing person; however, I must rely on my unpractised

study of physiognomy, since you tell me his features are not indicative of his disposition. Were they the index, I think I could wish to discharge him; however, I have a sort of implicit confidence in Villiers—her gentleness and good sense appear to triumph over little troubles.

"She has much firmness of purpose, too, and is herself too experienced in grief to be ignorant of the feelings of poor George, dear boy! I think every care has been taken for the comfort of Lady Dentnoris's children.

"I had no particular admiration for Lord Dentnoris, and the remissness he has been guilty of in neglecting to make his marriage appear more clear to the world in general, has not tended to remove the unfortunate prejudice; yet, pardon me for this inadvertent judgment on the dead. His children, I am persuaded, are not to bear the bar sinister.

"You ask for the outline of your friend's Indian life.

"I gave it you, as far as the dear lady was

concerned. I knew little of them until about two years before Sarah's birth.

"Lord Dentnoris, it is well known, mixed in the world, vainly hoping to meet the prototype of his buried wife.

"He actually craved for the companionship of such another gifted creature; not perceiving that the passionate idolatry whence the desire emanated, forbade his seeing, even in utmost loveliness, an equality with the charms he deplored.

"At length, abandoning this wild aspiration, he was imperceptibly drawn nearer to his children, while a flushed cheek and proudly affectionate look invariably succeeded the receipt of Harold's well-known superscription. And had you not ———," here an erasure again occurs. "He seemed to know not whence to turn, or where to fly.

"If I adverted to a religious thought, his rejoinder proved the chaos in his heart. No principle therein had ever been arranged. Im-

pulse, and impulse alone, governed every action; all his doings were the result of unschooled pride and inextinguishable prejudices.

"To love, with George Dentnoris, was to live—to lose the object of that love, proved death.

"For eight long years he struggled on, mechanically performing his military duties, husbanding his wealth, unwilling to quit the land of his dead Sarah, and laughing only when the opportunity to scorn the world was his pleasure; yet there was a light, a gladness, in his countenance when in the presence of his children.

"Of Lady Dentnoris I have given you my sketch. I was truly attached to her, and as faithfully bound to the service of her children, and uncontrollable circumstances only could deny me the delight of accompanying them to their mother's land.

"The parting interview with his little girl was heartrending in the extreme. I trembled

till my bosom well nigh burst with its load of grief; and though it be painful for you, my dear sir, to peruse these mournful pages, yet it is part of my promise to relate the appalling scene. Thank heaven! the recital cannot dress itself in the horrors of the living tragedy.

"A cheerful sight preceded the terrible event—the two children merrily chatting in their father's room. Alas! they were interrupted by the sudden announcement of the boat's arrival to convey them away. The unwelcome herald was desired to wait.

"You will naturally ask, when did Lord Dentnoris overcome his repugnance to the presence of his daughter? The remorse arising from that bitter misjudgment but increased the anguish of the parting.

"With human hearts it must be ever thus: his jealous wrath, 'that for the babe its mother died,' gradually lost its influence, and even more than parental fondness gained an arbitrary dominion over the once cold father

—he loved her dearly! His former rancour imperceptibly gave place to excessive devotion.

"The final warning at length arrived—the thought seemed madness to him; he raved of his love for them, averring that with their last look his better angels would depart; without them whence should come his light—his existence? whence the dream of heaven—the happy taste of quietude and home? The last hour flew by—the last, the fatal hour, with but a few moments to precede the wrench of earth's best, closest tie.

"Poor Lord Dentnoris! people remember him here as the gayest of the gay, whose voice seemed the constant harbinger of fun for youth, contagious mirth for age or sickness; now abject and most lone he sat, gazing on his little Sarah, taking one deep, long look, to fill the memory for years, as she stole away to climb behind his chair, and twine her small soft arms about his neck, entreating him to accompany

his own Sarah to the 'merry England' he had so often talked to her about.

"'Do come with little Sally, papa; will you?'

"'I will! I vow I will,' peremptorily ejaculated the father.

"It was now my turn to expostulate. His very life (as you know) would have been perilled by such a step—the crisis of his court-martial at hand, and his judges so inexorably inveterate. It was impossible.

"'No, Lord Dentnoris; far better detain your children,' I observed.

"'No! no!' he wildly retorted. 'No! no! I will be tranquil; you have recalled me to my senses. I must play the soldier's part; his hardest task I must fulfil. They shall acquit me honourably! I desert my post, for aught but my country's benefit or the cause of honour? No! at least they must acknowledge my motive for quitting the spot, at which, like a prisoner, I may have slept, and the ———

have been cut off. No! I must be acquitted, and then a trial for cowardice to those who accuse me, who, unwilling themselves to hazard the die, crept to the court for redress. No! no! The world shall determine on whom the blast of fear fell during that dark battle-day.'

"The nervous spasm returned as he pressed the darling girl to his breaking heart, calling on me to take her away. 'My soul will leap from out its boundary, I know; I feel it now!' he vociferated; then, sinking into a more gentle tone, whispered huskily, 'I understand my inability to be absent from the court-martial.'

"I left the room with the weeping child, Georgy only remaining to complete the repair of an expensive toy—a mimic battery, and dreaming in his busy mind of the time when he would be a soldier, like his father. He turned to speak the thought; but quickly perceiving that his parent's brow was clouded,

resumed his work. Then, with the hope to chase its shadows once again, as he had so frequently done before, he grasped the hand held out towards him,—started.

"The report of a pistol and one heavy groan paralysed the affrighted boy; his young eyes fixed upon the rolling balls of his father's.

"A shrill, wild, frenzied scream, and the child was silent, cold, and mute as the still tenant of the grave. No sob, no tear, but low and hollowly he emitted the sound rather than spoke, 'My father!' and pointing to the pistol near the self-murdered man, '*that* has killed my father.'

"We tried a thousand efforts to disengage his hand from that of the scarce less icy one he clasped. We told him Lord Dentnoris only swooned, and urged him by every argument to quit the body, and not allow his sister to hear of the accident. My own perception alone could have induced me to believe that so young a face could wear the aspect of such impenetrable horror.

" Medical aid was instantly procured, but to no purpose; life was extinct. One moment had dislodged the soul from earth to eternity; it had passed unsummoned into the presence of the King of kings, unredeemed from this world's guilt by any outward sign, reserving (if it so can be) but the swift transit to another land wherein to supplicate the pardon of his Judge, —a brief, brief space of time for penitence.

" After awhile the boy raised his heavy eyes to mine. I felt instantly overpowered, and wept. My tears evidently roused him from his muteness. Again he screamed—servants rushed simultaneously into the room, and the tumult of distress began anew; incessantly he shrieked for his father, till senseless and cold he sank upon the pillow. I could not feel sufficiently thankful for little Sarah's absence.

" The history is easily finished. We removed the dear children. You are acquainted with the after proceedings; and I love the sweet orphans too well to think of to-morrow with

tranquillity, when, however, I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you, and adding any information I may have omitted to give you.

"I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

JEANNETTE DELVOR."

"Does it not appear strange, Beverley, that Brook Emmersly should require this written testimony of the sad event? I do not understand the trouble he has taken to make every particular so unnecessarily clear."

"Oh! yes, yes, Marianne, it is wise, judicious, extremely judicious to do so—quite correct. Poor George! This self-sacrifice of a brave man is very horrible. Dentnoris," continued the Rector, "was a good soldier, and an exquisitely accomplished gentleman, of highly-cultivated tastes and a more than common mind. Woe to them who forgot their trust in his youth! Woe to them who left his soul to struggle on to blight, and betrayal beneath the untutored bent of human nature's

earliest depravity, unblessed by counsel, and unturned to God—permitted every quality to lie dormant, unawakened to the spirit of true principle and holy faith!

"My poor cousin would have scorned to bear false witness, yet the basis of truth and goodness never had been revealed; his talents lay scattered, unassorted, like the shifting glass of the kaleidoscope, sometimes beautiful and bright, as often dark and unattractive. None knew what form the varying hue of his fancies might in turn assume, or by reckless usage the brittle casket prove valueless and blank. Woe, I say, to those who forbore to regulate the inward thoughts of that most glorious mind of high and honourable purpose. Poor George! his care and sorrow, pride and joy, became the sport of every impulse."

"Dear Beverley, let us lay aside these fearful records to-night. It is late, and anxiety has exhausted you; perhaps to-morrow's post may bring us news of Harold."

The brother walked sorrowfully to his dormitory, and his low "good night" struck upon the widow's heart in mournful contrast to the almost seraph voices of the youthful sleepers.

CHAPTER II.

"There sleep the dead, whose living tones filled earth
with dreams of Heaven."

THE GRAVES OF GENIUS.

"As flowers keep springing, though their dazzling bloom
Is oft put forth for worms to feed upon;
So hearts, though wrung by traitors and the tomb,
Shall still be precious, and shall still love on."

E. C.

TEN years ago the merry bells of Landsworth church pealed forth their most joyous chimes to welcome the young bride of Beverley Dentnoris; but seven fleeting months succeeded to that happy time, and the bells tolled mournfully for a departed spirit. The hectic cheek and bright hazel eyes had withered prematurely.

The tale of grief spread quickly from cottage to cottage, and weary peasants, waiting for the grave, aroused their wasted limbs from pain and sickness, to weep for the lady of the Manor House, and in due time totter with the sable train to the dark burial place.

Forty summers and the wreck of many a cherished joy had blanched the auburn hair, which in thick heavy curls fell aside from the forehead of the Rector, while deep brown eyes, full of hope and goodness, added considerably to render his otherwise plain features interesting.

His sister, Marianne, had been united at an early age to a baronet of small fortune, with whom the glad wife passed several years of undisturbed tranquillity, — time, however, bent his frame beneath the scourge of hereditary consumption; and though death's warning scarce was credited, ere the spirit escaped to the realms of purer bliss and richer joy, Sir Taunton Wilverton obeyed the mandate

of his Creator, prepared and happy in the prospect of a certain immortality—a blessed reunion in a world of love.

Lady Wilverton, now in the prime of womanhood, had very recently joined the home of her brother — a circumstance of strange import having induced her removal from Wilverton Abbey, the residence of her lost husband — and bidding her once again into that world whose covenants, her widowhood of heart conspired to teach her, might be renounced at will.

The circumstance which led her to share the mansion of Beverley Deutnoris originated in the disappointment experienced from the altered habits of the nephew already alluded to, Brook Emmersly, the son and heir of her sister and Sir Oakington Emmersly, of whom, at the desire of Sir Taunton, she had taken the entire charge during the first year of their marriage.

The gambling propensities of Brook's father had so impaired the value of his rent-rolls,

that at the period of Lady Wilverton's union he was prevailed upon to quit England for Germany, accompanied by his equally prodigal lady. Thus Brook Emmersly became the spoiled pet of unprincipled domestics, till fortune transferred him to the care of his aunt.

He had just attained his fourteenth year, when the grief consequent on the death of his uncle engrossed every heart within the precincts of the Abbey, and, except in the daily routine of his studies, Brook became a free agent,—no whim unattended to, no request ungratified, he roamed about, the idol of shepherd boys, the admired of every villager—save those who in suffering or deformity required consolation or relief—wayward, wilful, and extravagant; still Lady Wilverton perceived no defect in the fashionable-looking happy boy, but with extraordinarily blind attachment watched with excessive fondness the perils he incurred, as he rode, or by other means displayed his buoyant bold-heartedness.

It was at length considered expedient to send the tall-grown youth to Oxford. There he eminently distinguished himself, at the same time lavishly wasting the income Lady Wilverton separately contributed, to hide the deficiencies of his private purse.

The eighteenth anniversary of Brook's birth was celebrated with great feasting and merry-making among the tenantry, and a few joyous faces gathered round the social table at the Abbey. It was the last day to be spent with his beloved aunt previous to his departure for Germany: the earnest appeal of Lady Oakington had been acceded to, and the dear right to have him for the whole vacation yielded to a parent's entreaty for the company of her only son. In the present instance it was requested that Brook should arrive at Munich in time for the celebration of festivities consequent on the marriage of a near relation.

Lady Wilverton had consented with an aching heart, and heavy forebodings of coming

ill;—how opposite to the hopes animating the dreams of her volatile nephew!

Years passed away unmarked by a visit to Wilverton Abbey from him who had been so cherished there.

Letters came, and several times the aunt had longed for one whole day, if no longer time could be sacrificed to her dull home. Alas! Brook Emmersly felt little disposed for the lone retirement of its neighbourhood, in exchange for the brilliant groups who crowded the halls of his gay mother.

The indulgences he had loved at Wilverton had been driven from his memory, and in their place might be found a thousand fascinating schemes for his amusement—a hundred bewildering attractions which in a visit to his aunt could never occur; and selfishness absorbed the grateful retrospect which, while making his last adieus to the guardian of his boyhood, and despite his sanguine expectations,

brought the coursing tears upon his cheek, and bade one in that parting scene recollect, for ever and for aye, the hearty kiss and faltering "Good bye!"

CHAPTER III.

"I would not escape from Memory's land
For all that the eye can view;
For there's dearer gold in Memory's land,
Than the ore of rich Peru.
I clasp the fetters by Memory twined,
The wanderer's heart and soul to bind."
MISS HOLFORD.

IT was evening, the twilight of a sultry rainy season, when Lady Wilverton sat alone in the mansion of her dead husband. The portraits of Sir Taunton and herself hung over the wide fire-place. The old walls looked dim, and the fitful whispering breeze played wantonly with the light curtains, at every moment startling her by a wilder gust.

There was a yearning in the widow's heart, on which she communed silently,—a longing to find one thing of life exclusively to cherish for herself. Harold was in Italy, and the dear children, whose arrival in England I have commenced by anticipating, were still in India; in short, the fourth winter of Brook Emmersly's absence was approaching, and Aunt Marianne seriously meditated a departure from her quiet home, on a visit to gayer scenes.

Suddenly her attention was directed to the sound of horses on the gravel road, and imagining it could be none other than her brother or Harold, she hastily quitted the room to welcome them. A tall slight form arrested her progress at the entrance-hall.

"Brook!" exclaimed the rejoicing aunt— "Brook, can this possibly be you? What a glad surprise!"

"The very same Brook Emmersly," responded the softly rich, yet manly tones of

the nephew—"the unpardonable truant of three long years."

"Of four, nearly, Brook," retorted the lady, slowly, as he led her to a seat.

"Of nearly four! Yes, I do confess it sorrowfully, Aunt Marianne; yet forgive me, I am overjoyed to see you again, and to press these little fingers in mine own once more."

"Be merciful as you are strong, dear Brook," cried Lady Wilverton, half disconcerted by his manner; "but come, let me see your features more distinctly beneath this solitary lamp; the twilight is so dark I can scarcely discern your figure. Are you indeed my own child?—I must really disown you—you have grown too manly to be petted—too manly by half, and make me feel excessively venerable by the comparison—That will do!" repeated the aunt, endeavouring to extricate herself from the embrace of her enraptured favourite.

"You are more beautiful than ever, my

sweet aunt. Oh! why not cast these gloomy robes aside?" he observed, looking on the sable costume of her widowhood, not yet relinquished for the trappings of a gayer world.

The widowed wife sighed, though she smiled, at his so well remembered passion for brilliancy. "Tell me, Brook, whence come you—how far have you travelled on horseback? Not far, to be so little inconvenienced by the incessant rain, which has nearly destroyed the road by which you entered."

"No! my beautiful aunt, the last stage was a short one. I met the Duke of ——— at Munich, and returned with him to England, in order to be present at his brother's wedding—nothing but weddings: this one I allude to is to take place on the 21st of the present month."

"Ah, yes; I declined accompanying the Herbertons," replied the lady.

"And are you ever to be thus isolated? You, most beautiful of earth's creatures, dear

Lady Wilverton?" said the nephew, looking with intense admiration into the fond blue eyes of the widow, as she gently disengaged her hand from his continued pressure.

"Not always; indeed I was sighing for companionship, when you arrived so opportunely to banish all my gloominess and isolation."

"May it ever be my lot to do so!" murmured Brook; "and had my ride been ten thousand miles, the distance would have seemed but footsteps, had I thought that the beautiful Marianne remembered me."

"Ah, Brook! you have grown courtly in your expressions since last we met, and think to flatter your poor aunt from her loneliness; but your adulation far outruns your wit."

"Even so, fair lady, slander me—at least, my heart may adulate in silence," muttered the youth, flinging himself upon a fauteuil near the chair occupied by Lady Wilverton.

"Really, you puzzle me. Forgive my re-

tort, if it sounded rudely, Brook. I only despise such idle tales of flattery, and would rather you found other means to tell me that in your weary absence you cherished some recollection of Aunt Marianne."

"Some recollection!" repeated the rapt listener; then returning to his assumed thoughtfulness, affording Lady Wilverton the longed-for opportunity to survey a form she had dearly loved in its boyish outline,—ay, may-be, better loved than now, when doubts, and fears, and many an uncertain dread intruded themselves, despite her efforts to be calm.

Brook Emmersly was not handsome; no flowing hair, nor eyes whose fixed look proved universally fascinating, but entirely the reverse to those he deemed unworthy his devotion. Often his manner grew repulsive, and forbade approach. At other times, and with others, whose beauty or eccentricity invited observation, Mr. Emmersly availed himself of his

concealed fascinations, and, like the basilisk, attracted to destroy.

His tall well-proportioned figure gave ample dignity for display, and raised to its full height, then bent in graceful admiration, charmed the gentle widow, while her heart misgave her feeling, and she half repented her continual prayers for his return.

A few years only had elapsed since the youth she loved, the child she had treasured, the boy so fondly caressed, stood again before her—the joyful tone gone from him, the laugh of frolic passed away, and in their stead the measured tones of glorious manhood, the gaze of worldlier teaching, and the courtliness of dissimulative fashion.

"Alas!" thought lady Wilverton, "he seems so changed. The boy quite laid aside. I must follow a new course now; farewell, silly hopes! Why did I not count the years for more than the simple reason of his absence? Yet, why muse thus; he may not wholly have

estranged himself from his boyhood's love for his aunt?"

These reflections had stolen unwarily through the mind of Lady Wilverton, as she waited a reply to her observation. Brook watched the varying emotions, and justly divined their cause.

"Some recollection!" again he uttered. "I have allowed my leisure moments to be filled but by one image, Lady Wilverton,—that of a kind and gentle creature, to whom I panted to return; one who, loving and loved, my young breast idolized. Such was the woman whose every look was present in my days—was near me in my nights!" said Brook Emmersly, in low emphatic accents. "I had forgotten the cold and reasonably proud Lady Wilverton. Some recollection," said he, bitterly, "ought, yet did not, remain of haughty coldness and unconquerable disdain."

"I know not how to understand you, Sir," retorted the wife, though widowed, of Sir

Taunton Wilverton; "you perplex me by your language and gaze."

"I never looked at you till now. I saw you beautiful, lovely, admired, gentle, and sometimes alone, but blindly looked, or never looked till now."

"Not with your present stare, Mr. Emmersly," replied his distressed hearer; "nor do I confess myself flattered by your astonishment. Surely," added the mortified aunt, "surely you are not ill, or mad; how, else, could you treat me thus? Have I changed, dear Brook, since the sad morning of our first farewell, when I kissed you with a mother's love, and sent you reluctantly from my lone home into the wide and giddy world? You wept upon my neck, and honoured poor Aunt Marianne then—you could not then have wounded her, as now."

Tears, floods of burning tears, followed the appeal of Lady Wilverton. Brook Emmersly relinquished the hand he till then had forcibly

retained, and, kneeling at her feet, besought her pardon and forgetfulness.

"Never shall my adoration trouble you again. In my poor heart it shall canker and destroy itself. Marianne, I loved you ever. In my boyhood it was as in manhood, in old age and in death shall still be. Marianne Wilverton shall be my watchword; to the portal of heaven it shall accompany me, or, if that blessed gate be closed against your once loved favourite, the sound may win me happiness to bear even the tortures of the doomed.

"I have been absent many years, and you, my dream, have been beside me everywhere.

"I have returned; my love lives undiminished, bursts forth anew, despite all efforts to conceal it.

"On the great sea, and in the gayest hour in lands more beautiful than our bleak country boasts, where climate heightens passion, and every breezy moonlight emulates the day, where every thought is warm — hot with

hopes and wishes—there, Lady Wilverton, I remembered Marianne; and now," continued the speaker, aptly comprehending his advantage in the agitated confusion and undisguised indignation of his listener's suffocating distress, unable to rise, to articulate, or scarce withdraw her look of unutterable astonishment; "and now, now, even my pale cheek shall help to testify, my trembling words affirm, the frantic love you calmly bid me hide, subdue, conquer,—yes, either command would be equally impracticable; yet do I swear to shut up every thought within my tormented soul for ever,—but hear me, Lady Wilverton—the memory shall colour future life with blackness,—I will avenge my love upon itself.

"Be calm, I pray you, Marianne, I will leave you for a moment; in the meanwhile pardon the insult of my offered love," murmured the young soldier, with a pathos too fatally impressive; and rising from his kneeling posture, hastily quitted the presence of his offended aunt.

Happy to be alone, Lady Wilverton attempted to understand the feelings of the last and hurried interview with the companion whose absence had been so heavily deplored. What uneasiness his return had caused her already! It was a fruitless speculation, she rapidly convinced herself; her mind had been surprised into a chaos of thought—ideas, unconnected and undefinable, turbulently claimed pre-eminence—plain sense had altogether abandoned the contest—each distinct perception of her nephew's folly assisted the illapse of her mind, till, weary of self-communion, she approached the table, on which lay a riding-whip, given to Brook Emmersly several years ago. Lady Wilverton mechanically took it in her hand,—her own name was graven on the ring attached, and beneath, the initials of the owner.

"This is madness; yet perhaps he loved me then, as boys love their cherished mothers."

Another feeling predominated in her heart, an unconsciously intuitive recollection of her

personal charms, the many instances in which the colour of her eyes, the prevailing bloom of her complexion, the unfading brightness of her smile, notwithstanding grief had been a frequent guest within her mind, had been made known to her. Brook's unrestrained frankness, which in "the boy" had fascinated, made her hesitate to condemn it in "the man." The beauty and the matron combated for the supremacy: soon the latter conquered, and forgiveness was resolved upon,—he meant no more than love for his second mother, thought the lady.

"No! no! poor boy, he will learn to stem those passionate expressions; he has gleaned somewhat of fashion's vitiated notions: the country will revive his healthful reasoning; how absurd of me, to pervert his fondness thus! I will ring for Waynard, she shall see his comforts carèd for."

Her soliloquy ended—the hand was raised to execute the summons for her dear old

domestic, when another arrested it, and Brook Emmersly stood again before her.

"Promise but one thing, Marianne;—say you permit me to remain here to-night?"

"Yes! if at the same time you promise to address me as of old—Aunt Marianne, or Lady Wilverton."

"Well, Lady Wilverton, have you promised?"

"Most certainly. I rose for the purpose of desiring your room to be carefully restored to the appearance it wore in by-gone days."

"Not yet, then—stay one moment. I would fain tranquillize myself before encountering the scrutiny of your retainers, who, for old acquaintance sake, will speak a few words to greet your prodigal son."

The widow welcomed the respite. She, too, immeasurably more than her young relative, required a moment of calm conversation to reassure her of his sanity.

Family changes were then discussed, the

tea-tray followed, and the evening passed by almost pleasantly.

At ten o'clock a loud bell announced the hour of prayer; Mr. Emmersly pleaded fatigue as an excuse for retiring, and this purposed escape from a venerated custom again jarred discordantly in the mind of his anxious aunt, creating painful prognostications she would gladly have suppressed.

While these unhappy musings engaged the beautiful hostess, how various were the thoughts of Mr. Emmersly; the repressive "Good night" of his aunt chilled his desire to repeat the warm caress with which he had met her.

In bitterness of spirit he wandered towards the garden; every door was barred by the careful domestics; his only resource seemed the dormitory, in which he had so frequently slept long ago; each mute object awakened memories of happiness, and shortly he heard the voice of the mistress bidding Waynard a soft "Good night," as in those evenings of yore.

The several doors were closed, and every sound hushed, leaving him the only wanderer in the old Abbey.

Impatiently he sought the drawing-room, re-lighted the candles, and, alone with the portrait of his quiet aunt, felt composed, till drowsiness overtook him, and he slept.

The faint light of early daybreak stole over his features as the startled housemaid opened the shutters, betraying the whereabouts of their eccentric visitor.

Wakened and abashed, he re-ascended to his lonelier room, bestowing one long farewell glance on the portrait, which had soothed his troubled senses through the night, and at all times, even when a child, struck him as forming an exquisite relief to the demure-looking pictures sketched from Sir Taunton Wilverton's grim ancestors.

The morning rose in summer splendour, and the aunt's first prayers were for the welfare of her guest. "I will lead him back to the kindly

love of other days," thought she; "I will teach him to be gay and glad within my home again."

Breakfast waited, still no guest appeared! At length, weary of suspense, Lady Wilverton inquired for Mr. Emmersly.

An account of his midnight vigils was speedily given, and when the nephew entered, his pale cheek appearing yet more haggard, his voice trembling and hoarse, the generous aunt could no longer pursue the restrained courtesy she had promised her own good sense, as the only sure remedy for recalling his forgotten allegiance; but, approaching him with her usual affectionate warmth, lamented the dreary aspect of his sleeping-room, which had evidently occasioned his nocturnal wanderings.

Imagine her disappointment when his hand, cold as her manner the previous night, was withdrawn ere hers had scarcely touched it.

"Marianne, or — I entreat your pardon, Lady Wilverton—it was your portrait drew me, as the needle to the pole, from my apart-

ment to the drawing-room. I disdain concealment of my love; yourself I will not supplicate or annoy by protestations, which appear as distasteful to you as unworthy of your consideration or sympathy. Your solicitude is, I trust, rewarded," added he, with bitterness. "There is yet one other portrait in this house; I fancy it may be now in a tenantless attic; it formerly hung above the work-table of my aunt Marianne."

"And hangs there to this moment, Brook!"

"Really! May I see it? it is the portrait of a boy! I would fain mark his boyish smile once more."

"To contrast it with the man's—dear Brook?"

"Frowns better suit the man, Lady Wilverton; smiles are but the toys of wanton hearts."

"Well, even so; but can you oblige me by returning to common sense for a season, and yield this romantic nonsense to the compiler of

fashionable fables, who might derive some novel extravagancies from a conversation with you occasionally, to add to the list of men who have immortalized themselves by silly sayings! I am out of patience with your folly, Brook, and ask you, if you value my good opinion, to desist. Dispel your frowns, I pray you, and let us be happy."

In the south breakfast-room, and still suspended over the table of the aunt, was seen the miniature portrait of "a boy." A moment, and the truthful likeness was spread in fragments on the carpet.

"'Twere better thus," said the original, crushing the ivory beneath his feet; "that 'boy' exists no longer. Forget him, lady, and when the babbling world issues its accusing fables against the man who was that 'boy,' —but now grown old, too manly to be loved—remember who devoted him to calumny. Mark the precise time. Now we can speak rationally, an' you will it so, lady."

A haughty look stole to the eyes of Lady Wilverton; the first, the only one those blue orbs had ever frowned upon him, while a sad subdued voice spoke the never-forgotten, though, at the moment, the unbelieved, farewell. "Mr. Emmersly, be not hurried in your departure from Wilverton, owing to the absence of its mistress."

"Marianne! dear lady!" ejaculated the excited nephew, unbending from his stately demeanour.

The aunt had already disappeared.

"She cannot, will not, surely leave me! as her guest, she must be civil to me. Of course she is not gone."

Vainly his recollection of that look, its pride, its haughty frown, told him they had parted for ever,—in the world they should not meet again. But Marianne Wilverton's heart had wholly banished him; henceforth his conscience whispered, "I am Mr. Emmersly; no more Brook—the name she, only she, could

beautify. When spoken by her it fell upon the ear as music on the waters, softened into sweetness."

Still hope led him on, and bade him fancy it not impossible that he might see her graceful figure leaning over the gallery adjoining, perhaps waiting to proffer the forgiveness he would peradventure seek.

She was not there, and for a moment the proud contemner of feminine vanity scrupled to advance.

"Yet—yet I will—yes, kneel to her again for pardon. Oh! why do I thus transgress, why displease that sweet perfection of a woman? by Jove, no woman, but a goddess animated. Yes, beautifully proud. I will go to her, I will crave her pardon; she will not, cannot leave me so abruptly."

"Her ladyship has had letters this morning, sir, which call her away. She bade me give her best wishes to you, and hopes you will make yourself comfortable while you stay, sir."

"Is that the only message?" inquired Mr. Emmersly of the butler, who had delivered his lady's orders with as little kindness as possible, having traced something bordering on unhappiness in the countenance of his beloved mistress before her departure, very properly attributing it to the "wild new ways" of her nephew.

"Quite all, sir. The particular letter came from Mr. Harold, who is to arrive at Landsworth to-morrow, and leave the same evening."

"What! young Mr. Dentnoris? Where is he going to?

"With his lordship, sir, into foreign parts."

"But know you not the name of man, or country?"

"Not we, sir. We are very sorry Mr. Harold cannot stay among us, sir, and that is all we think about. It isn't for us, sir, to inquire particulars."

"What age is Mr. Harold, eh?" said Brook, impatiently.

"Twenty-four, or thereabouts, I should think, sir; he will be twenty-five, come Christmas. Shall I pour out your tea, sir?"

"No, leave me;" then blandly adding, "I thank you." Brook Emmersly conceived his unusual urbanity had made a more favourable impression on old Herton than, as he well remembered, his youthful pranks had established for him.

Brook Emmersly, the admired of all admirers, in the magnificent saloons of his mother's circle, sat alone, neglected by domestics, scorned by the lady of that ancient Abbey!

"Twenty-four years and a half—too old! Nay, not too old to be loved. Years, may I say, my junior! Harold Dentnoris, I register this account against you. Twenty-four years and a half!"

"Her ladyship's compliments," muttered a lacquey, presenting a note to the soliloquist, and instantly quitting the room.

"By all that's divine, she relents!" exclaimed the nephew, breaking the seal of an envelope, directed in the hand-writing of Lady Wilverton, while his vain heart busily whispered success to his adventurous entreaties.

Pale, listless, and tremulous, sat Brook Emmersly; the breakfast passed away untasted, a scowl of deeper meaning swept across his features—a sigh, a malediction, and Wilverton Abbey was forsaken by its once cherished inmate.

CHAPTER IV.

"Then must I plunge again into the crowd!
And follow all that peace disdains to seek?
Where revel calls, and laughter vainly loud,
False to the heart, distorts the hollow cheek,
To leave the flagging spirit doubly weak;
Still o'er the features, which perforce they cheer,
To feign the pleasure or conceal the pique,
Smiles form the channel of a future tear,
Or raise the writhing lip, with ill-dissembled sneer."

CHILDE HAROLD.

THE letter that summoned Lady Wilverton to Landsworth was not really of an imperative nature. It had chanced to arrive at the moment when an excuse to her fond old servitors was almost necessary to be given, in order to prevent surmises injurious to the amiable character, or otherwise, of her nephew.

To spare his feelings she had gladly accepted the plea for absence, on every other account so incomprehensible to her household. Her visit would seem well-timed to her brother, with whom she could remain until her own house was again deserted by its wayward visitor. But we turn to the individual just introduced to the reader.

As private secretary to the ambassador at the court of ——, Harold Dentnoris a second time bade adieu to England. It was merely a nominal appointment; a friend had proposed his accompanying the suite.

Harold was unquestionably handsome; his thrilling laugh and perfect height,—his tone, his manner, and the air of pensive thought which almost too frequently stole over him, enhanced his captivating address. He was unlike Mr. Emmersly; he smiled on all,—Brook but on the favoured few.

This quiet smile so universally admired had once induced a lady to propose a comparison

between the two Englishmen, much to the disquietude of Lady Wilverton's *protégé*, particularly when they arrived at the question as to who could possibly compare the large expressive eyes of Harold Dentnoris to the sarcastic grey orbs of Brook Emmersly; notwithstanding many, even then present, had felt their unpleasing glances melt to the tenderness of deep love or passionate devotion.

"But," exclaimed the lady, "one could pardon their contemptuous expression, if the mouth redeemed it;—that feature is by far less certain, and never complimentary in kindness or disdain."

"And now," thought the banished nephew, as he passed through the outer gate of the Abbey grounds, "now, even Marianne assents to Madame Cuvier's opinion. They both shall feel my power elsewhere. Harold will be loved—I neglected! To my fate I cling. India for me, and revenge on Dentnoris the younger."

Time wore calmly on, the Rector and his sister finding ample occupation in their happy valley; nevertheless, the letter which apprized them of Lord Dentnoris's intention to consign his two remaining children to their care, provided they acquiesced in the proposal, was hailed with real pleasure; and, as my introduction records, was, at the expiration of a few short months, happily realized.

To that period I must now revert, and in the succeeding chapter endeavour to portray the present possessor of the Dentnoris title and estates.

CHAPTER V.

"Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionably,
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them."

RICHARD THE THIRD.

"Where are the violets now,
That strew the green lap of the new come spring!"

Arthur, only surviving brother of the deceased Lord Dentnoris, inherited the title, &c. in the absence of any legal evidence concerning the legitimacy of his brother's sons. Ugly, deformed, and a bachelor; a man who united to his unamiable looking exterior an intuitive hatred for all good things, except those which administered to his insatiable and worst appetites; it was therefore entirely incongruous, in his opinion, that his cousin should occupy

the Manor House and incumbency, at no gain to the proprietor—his elder brother having presented the living of Landsworth to Beverley Dentnoris nineteen years previously, accompanying the gift with the free tenancy of the Manor House and its dependencies, in return for which the charge of the then infant Harold was accepted.

The transfer having been a private proceeding, the Rector had rendered himself liable to be displaced at the caprice of the successor. "Notice to quit" was consequently received, as no argument could be adduced to support his title to the occupancy, farther than the kindness of the deceased lord.

The farewell to his beloved parishioners was not an easy task—the many familiar faces—the quiet trees, and spire of that old church, all were dear to the pastor's recollection: however, the edict had gone forth—parting looks were given, and his carriage, though not drawn by those who bewailed his exit, was

surrounded by full hearts and tearful eyes, and the rich memories of trust fulfilled and God's commandments kept.

Alas! Landsworth, with its venerated reminiscences, would have been too painful a contemplation until the rights of his young nephew could be established; yet this hope seemed wholly crushed by the absence of proof. Advertisement after advertisement was published—no reply attended them, although the journals of the United Kingdom had filled columns on the subject. No fact could be elicited—even the barristers were hopeless of confirming the children's legitimacy.

We must pass over two long years at Marchmont, and congratulate the good Rector on the receipt of the following letter:—

"REV. SIR,

"I am desired by your friend the Bishop of —— to request your acceptance of the vicarial appointment at ——; he will

write himself as soon as his convalescence will permit, and in the mean time begs, if possible, you will allow him the pleasure of an interview.

"I am, Rev. Sir,

"Yours, &c.

"R. BOLDEN."

"You will accept it, Beverley, will you not?" asked Lady Wilverton.

"Oh, most certainly; the town is the drawback; the children will not like to be immured in a market town, with its concomitant bustle."

"Oh, yes, Uncle Beverley, we shall still be with you and Aunt Marianne; we shall be quite glad to show you that we like it, because you do."

"My boy! long may the selfishness of life be unfelt, as now, and my children make us happy by their love."

"Next week, then, Beverley, we may think of leaving this?"

"Yes, I fancy so. Harold's absence, and the desire to possess some real occupation ——"

"Beyond that of being ever occupied in doing good!" interrupted his sister.

"In following my avocation, Marianne, I shall be delighted to find the present offer desirable. Why not let us send our horses, and make the journey in this way—Drive to the first station, then travel by the railway to ——; the phaeton can meet us there, and we again drive for the remaining two miles across the country?"

"Beautiful!" exclaimed the orphans, rejoiced at the prospect of change.

The morrow's sun shone brightly, as the happy party drove through the mazy lanes of Colonel Clairlowe's property, towards a station of the Great Western railroad.

The journey was accomplished.

"How very, very different to Landsworth," said the little Sarah; "nothing but a lawn, that you can only see when these heavy gates

are unclosed, and now we are within these walls we seem quite prisoners."

"It is very different; yet will you not flatter your aunt and myself by endeavouring to be happy here for a short season?"

Sarah felt rebuked, although the question was made more in sorrow than in anger—sorrow to curtail the joys of his beloved child, with an assurance in his own heart that so enchanting a country would afford a wide field for her free spirits to delight in.

The youthful girl, still blushing at her selfish expression—her allusion to scenes she well understood had brought grief and pain to those she loved, hastily attempted to repair her fault, by admiring a pretty little room—to her astonishment overlooking a magnificent garden.

"This, then, shall be my Sally's room," said the Rector, kissing the soft white brow, beneath which the blue eyes laughed their glad thanks.

I must now shortly describe the economy of the new residence, whose locality might have been considerably improved. I must, however, speak of it as it was when my friends took possession.

The house stood in the centre of a populous market town, surrounded by shops and warehouses, and all sorts of incongruities, which seemed entirely to exclude the poetry of life. Notwithstanding these objectionable points, Mr. Dentnoris was considered a fortunate man in obtaining the appointment, and many foretold his rapid advancement to a See.

On entering the lawn of very finite dimensions, a specimen of Elizabethan architecture presented itself, which had formerly towered alone among a forest of trees, all of which had been gradually subjected to the unbeautifying axe, to afford space for innovating habitations.

CHAPTER VI.

"O'er the far blue mountain,
O'er the white sea foam,
Come, thou long parted one,
Back to thy home."

NOT many weeks after the departure of the Rector's family from Marchmont, a happy circle gathered round the fire in Colonel Clairlowe's comfortable drawing-room, with its high broad windows buried in warm folds of amber damask, its panelled walls and quaint portraits all bespeaking the glory of comfort and quiet joy. The hollow downy-looking chairs, warm fauteuils, and backed ottoman, seemed cognizant of their patronage, as if participating in the happiness of those they held and cherished.

The old tortoiseshell cat, too, shared her portion of wealth and warmth.

They were a merry group.

On the morning of that day the young scion of their name had returned from the first Scinde campaign. How his glad heart bounded as he thanked Time for having touched so lightly the beloved inmates of his home!

"My father, you are very little greyer than when I said 'Good bye' four years ago."

"Why, Lodwick, that is a short time to whiten papa's brow in."

"And, dear one," replied he, "had I allowed twenty years, I will not be silenced till each of my party has been scrutinized sufficiently."

"Now you, Mary, bless you!" added the brother fondly, as the lovely eyes looked patiently and happily expectant of his quizzing, "you are taller and stouter, and, perhaps, more rosy."

"More rustic, entirely, as the Hibernian Ida would say."

"There sits my precious mother," exclaimed Lodwick, rapidly continuing his round of criticism, "in her black velvet and rubies, the model of an English gentlewoman, while you, my fair cousin," said the young soldier, gently, "look more pale than when I left home."

"Yes," added Mrs. Clairlowe, "more fragile in appearance, but, we hope, stronger in health. My Gertry, do not you feel so?" questioned the old lady.

Gertrude Grey was an orphan, dependent on Colonel Clairlowe. She had passed through early trials, and bent to the winter of destiny with patient resignation.

Lodwick's return assisted to make even her mind forget its sadness; and as she praised his altered looks from boyish fairness to the manly brown, they to whom she had become most dear marked with sanguine prophecy the smiles that greeted her girlhood's playmate.

The gaiety of meeting was softening into the tranquil tenderness of kindred sympathy,

as the well known ring of the latest postman drew forth sundry guesses as to who would receive a letter, and from whom.

The one epistle bore the ——— post-mark and the welcome hand-writing of Lady Wilverton; its contents were received with universal delight, and the kindly invitation for the Christmas week eagerly accepted, when Lodwick, starting from his chair, exclaimed—

"What a bore, though, that I was burdened with that despatch for the duke; if it had not sent me home I should feel disposed to grumble at it. I must be off again instantly; I was too late for an audience this morning; I must be punctual to-morrow, and I do believe the train passes at nine to-night."

"It wants now just a quarter to that hour, my boy," said the father; "the station is half a mile distant—you must be quick."

"Ah now, mamma, never condemn the railroads again, although they have divested England of half its picturesque loveliness, in

superseding those dear old teams," rejoined Miss Clairlowe. "Lodwick will only be a few hours accomplishing a journey which, in bygone years would have occupied as many days."

"You really leave us so soon, dear Lodwick?" inquired the mother.

"Yes; yes, verily, off I am in the next ten minutes."

"In ten minutes! better five," observed the old colonel—gratified by his once little son's present importance; "and after delivering the despatch, where march ye?"

"To General Deschamps. I have a packet for Ida, that I promised to deliver in person," replied he, dragging from his great-coat pocket the commission alluded to.

The immolation of the traveller in cloaks and shawls of every description was at length completed; the pale Gertrude alone forbore to assist in smothering the "beloved one," consequently escaping the acknowledgments from

time to time bestowed on the helpers in that novel toilet.

The fine tall form of the heir after awhile looked sufficiently disguised, and fancying ingenuity could devise nothing more snug, heard, to his utmost discomfiture, the voice of the good old colonel pronouncing his Macintosh to be indispensably requisite to the cloaking process, and forthwith it fell across the shoulders of the already encumbered young soldier.

"Good bye" was spoken, one other dear embrace, a kind look to the mute cousin, "Be guarded against the cold, dear lady," and he was gone.

A few moments of family devotion, and the inmates of that comfortable home were at rest.

The parents' anxious bosoms would have scarcely remained so, had they witnessed on that cold night the wrappers alternately discarded, and a cheroot produced as a substitute in less than half a minute after the massive

doors swung back, permitting the muffled traveller to judge for himself; yet so it was, and Lodwick Clairlowe reached the Golden Cross, Charing Cross, with no worse symptom than an immoderate appetite for breakfast.

CHAPTER VII.

" Morn's dew-enamelled flowers,
The cloud through azure sweeping,
Their brightness owe to sadder hours,
Their calm to storms and weeping."

Eight years had elapsed since the last unhappy interview between Lady Wilverton and her nephew Brook Emmersly.

Time had scarcely lessened her attractions; the beauty of Marianne seemed not evanescent as that of her contemporaries; an intelligence beamed in her countenance, undimmed by the hard touch of care; she remained fresh and blooming, as on that dismal morning when the young lover so erringly wooed his widowed aunt.

Lady Wilverton looked forward with delight to the impression her orphans would make on the expected guests. The day of arrival came, and with it the old-fashioned travelling equipage of Colonel Clairlowe rolled into the gates of ——— Vicarage, summoning a third part of the grey-headed vassals to the hall.

Unloading, laughing, and chattering soon filled the mansion, till at length the true English party were ushered to the drawing-room, where on either side of the mantelpiece stood the boy and girl, prettier and gayer even than usual.

Sarah was listening to a preamble of her brother's, about the ride from which he had just returned, and as the door opened, Lady Wilverton overheard the energetic remark of the juvenile equestrian:

"Oh, I do wish you might ride too, Sarah; you would enjoy it very much; yet if my aunt does not propose it—I suppose girls must

be older first—they do screech so when they are frightened."

"Do they, George? what, more than the boys?" remarked his aunt, resting a hand on each shoulder of the noble child.

"Yes, don't they?" said he, habitually yielding to her judgment.

"My darling, I will reserve the discussion for another time. Now I must introduce you to our 'invisible good spirits,' as you chose to designate Colonel and Mrs. Clairlowe; you know that they are acquainted with Mrs. Bacon."

"Mr. Lodwick! where is he?" asked the Rector, in a tone of surprise.

"I am sorry you have reason to make that inquiry, dear sir," replied Miss Clairlowe. "We expected to have seen him yesterday, and depended on his accompanying us, but something still detains him at Akbar House, the seat of General Deschamps; but I hope he will join us soon."

The sister gave a sigh for her brother, who,

she sadly feared, lingered in abeyance at the shrine of Ida Deschamps' vanity.

Luncheon soon passed, when a riding party, consisting of Mary, Mr. Dentnoris, and George, sallied forth on a visit to their old and dear friends, Lord and Lady Herberton, who lived about three miles distant.

George was in perfect ecstacies with Miss Clairlowe's horsemanship, declaring that when Sarah could ride equally well, he never would go out without her.

"It will tire your patience, I fear," said his uncle, "if you wait so long for Sarah's companionship. This lady is nearly nine years the senior of my little girl."

"Yes, sir, but Sarah learns everything quickly and cleverly, if Aunt Marianne would permit her to learn," replied the boy, looking earnestly for a smile of assent to his suggestion.

"I could easily teach her myself, Uncle Beverley."

"How very good of you," said Miss Clair-

lowe. "I am sure I shall make your little sister quite proud by my account of your kind intentions, for I am a confirmed tattler."

George laughed, the Rector seemed pleased, and the ride proved delicious.

Gertrude and the merry Sarah employed their first moments, after the dispersion of their party, in making a survey of the house and garden. Each corner of the singularly old-fashioned mansion was explored, the library by mutual consent left until the last, as a sort of resting-place for the languid guest. Thither now they passed, the child busily chatting in favour of each loved nook in that many-angled room.

Uncle Beverley's west side was especially observed, filled with his favourite authors, and exclusively reserved for him.

"And now," said the smiling girl, "if you will not think me very silly, as a curious lady told me I was, the other day, I will show you

my own best place of all the rooms. No one ever sits here but myself," added she, enthusiastically, turning at the same moment round an angle which formerly served for the recess of a large closet, but which the Rector had displaced in order to open a private door through the library to the front lawn. "And I like it so, because Georgy's pony leaves his footmarks on the soft grass; I can see them from here, and watch till he returns. I know, also, where he is gone, and that is something, when I may not accompany him. That corner," continued Sarah, walking to a comfortable nook in another direction, "is Aunt Marianne's. Georgy calls it the Benevolent Society's Hall, because all poor people who come for alms or work, rest here until Lady Wilverton sees them. Observe, by closing this door it shuts out the library."

"Ah! this is most delightful," exclaimed Miss Grey, as she leaned over the couch, weary with wandering.

"Do you like it really better than my own corner?" asked the girl, almost sadly.

"It is warmer, deâr little Sarah, by this blazing fire, otherwise not so pretty by any means; and I hope to sit here often, if you will only permit me."

How little the mind foresees—how blindly we are impelled from one calculation to another! Onward, onward, always onward. The fatal termination is seldom anticipated in our free reckonings. However we darken or embellish our future hopes, we rarely stop in those vivid calculations, and ask the may-be-time for death's unfriendly coming. Even our pale and wasting Gertrude hoped on, and it sustained her spirit.

Sarah arranged the pillows of the roomy couch, and, begging her to recline on it, stole softly away in search of her aunt, alarmed at the pallor of her companion.

Lady Wilverton was quickly in attendance, and the busy little girl, meanwhile finding a

pretty-looking volume, placed it by the invalid's side, reminding her of the wish expressed on entering the library, that she might be allowed to have anything to read while she rested for half an hour on that most delightful couch.

"You must like this book, dear lady, because everybody does," observed Sarah.

Gertrude received the volume, turned to the title-page; one look, and her cheeks grew roseate, the silent lips quivered, the hand refused its office.

Lady Wilverton heard the low, hushed sigh, and marked the sad exhaustion of her young friend, but the mystic agency she divined not; yet a strange fear, condemned as soon as acknowledged, oppressed her.

An undefinable apprehension crept to the mind of Marianne Wilverton, as she mused upon the singular coincidence, that the B. E. on the title-page had riveted the gaze of Gertrude Grey. Had Mr. Emmersly met her

at Munich, and was Miss Grey's an unrequited love? Had Brook sought her, and was his passion for the affectionate aunt wholly feigned?

Of this second hope Lady Wilverton would have gladly felt assured; but again, he had been in India upwards of four years, and Miss Grey seemed scarcely seventeen.

Oh, Fancy! you are indeed a wild wanderer, thought the widow. Perchance the title itself awakened memories unconnected with Brook Emmersly. I will, at least, lay the flattering unction to my soul, and divest myself of the painful thought that he could lure her to love, and then abandon,——

Notwithstanding Lady Wilverton's philosophy, a troubled foreboding blended itself with her last meditation in the library, and but for the voice of Miss Clairlowe endeavouring to arrest her exit, she might unconsciously have framed to certainties, her now dreamy apprehensions.

"Where shall I look for my cousin, dear Lady Wilverton?"

"On the couch at the back of my screen. you will see her, resting from the unusual travels just made in company with Sarah," replied the lady.

"And I hope," exclaimed the joyous tones of the younger lady, addressing Miss Grey, "that you have overcome all fatigue, and are quite ready to be present at my toilet. The dinner-bell will soon be rung, and I have twenty thousand things to communicate before the second bids us to the board."

At the approach of the ladies, Miss Grey carefully concealed the source of her study, and, at the invitation of her cousin, languidly moved from her reclining posture, forgetful of the fatal volume, which, by her movement, fell to the ground, when, as ever is the case, the unlucky initials, B. E., large and clear as small hand would admit, attracted the blue eyes of Mary Clairlowe.

Lady Wilverton again observed the transient flush suffuse the pallid cheek of the invalid.

Mary cast one mournful look at the fallen volume, thence into her cousin's eyes, with the earnest gaze of intense inquiry.

"Gertrude," she coldly uttered, "can you accompany me?"

"Yes, yes," whispered the faltering girl, while heavy tear-drops on her gentle friend's hand, as she bent to recover the hapless work, told more than words how truly devoted was each thought of love for one most, most unworthy.

"Mamma will lament to find this still remaining of his gifts, Gertrude!"

Gertrude's tears had dried, and, in their stead, an expression of subdued, settled sorrow; so irrevocably deep and drear the mental conflict seemed to have fixed its hopelessness, that further reproach, even by a sigh, was entirely avoided.

At the toilet all was explained, and the only dissatisfaction arose from the circumstance of Mr. Emmersly's acquaintance with Lady Wilverton, whom he had never told them he had met in England.

The feeling of mutual confidence with which the two girls took their seats at table, mystified their hostess, particularly when the spirits of the drooping Gertrude rivalled the sprightly joyousness of her cousin.

Dinner passed, and with undying love Miss Grey retreated to her dormitory, where, in a locked cabinet, she had deposited the sacred relic of her lover. Again and again her burning lips caressed it, tranquillizing her conscience on the subject of a promise made to her aunt, three years ago, by resolving each kiss should be the last.

There was no departure from her vow, when pressing to her beating heart the property of another—at least it was not one of his dear gifts to her. At length, one farewell kiss, and

the volume was restored to its old place, and Gertrude Grey smiled at her fancied forbearance in relinquishing the unexpected treasure.

The door of the library opened to admit little Sarah,—"Did you read my book, Miss Grey? When you have entirely finished it, Aunt Marianne wishes to have it. Mr. Emmersly," continued the child; Gertrude drew her breath suddenly, as if in alarm, while her young companion looked vainly round the room to discover the cause.

"What frightened you, Miss Grey? I think the lamp above you only flickered; no one is here but ourselves." And by this unsuspecting and comfortable assurance Gertrude was recalled to animation.

"Who gave you the book, did you say, dear Sarah?"

"Did I say that any one gave it me, Miss Grey? because it is not mine; I merely intended to tell you to whom it once belonged."

"Whom?" asked Gertrude, hurriedly.

"A Mr. Emmersly," responded the astonished girl; "yet why are you so frightened? There is no wind this evening to disturb even the papers when the door is opened; and, closed in as snugly as we are, I cannot think what frightens you, dear pale Miss Grey?"

"Oh, never mind, I have only caught a slight cold, and entreat you, dear child, to continue what you were about to say. What was it?"

"Nothing more than I sometimes think I can recollect Mr. Emmersly. Uncle calls him Brook, but Aunt Marianne frequently says Mr. Emmersly, so I suppose his proper name is Brook Emmersly."

Had the hero in person stood before them, Gertrude Grey could not have realized the memory of his beloved lineaments more perfectly than at the moment when the lively Sarah pronounced that dearest name on earth.

"I will tell you no more till you have recovered from coming down stairs in such a

hurry," added the child; "I had half forgotten my own errand too. Let me see," said she, seeking among the heap of periodicals for the "Indian Gazette." "Here it is; I am afraid you are too fond of books, Miss Grey, by your remaining such a long time in this quiet room. Come, if you please, as soon as you can; the piano is already open, and Aunt Marianne's harp tuned."

Mr. Dentnoris at this moment entered, hat in hand, intending to visit an infirm pensioner.

"Well, my love, where is the paper?" he inquired, addressing the orphan girl.

"Here, here, sir; I stayed to prevail on Miss Grey to forsake this dull room."

"Ah, do!" said the kind Rector, "and I will be your escort to the drawing-room."

"And I will answer all your questions about the book, if you will."

There was but one amid the crowd to understand how more than gladsome her lone heart felt with that one book, her only com-

forter! In that room was a thing once his—it peopled even the grim old frames with heavenly portraits, and cost poor Gertrude a full heart to leave it.

The first song ended, the kind old people anxiously watched the hectic on their niece's cheek; a thousand reasons were assigned for the nervous cough, despite Gertrude's playful disavowal of any painful symptom.

"I thought you looked tired while I was speaking of Mr. Emmersly," said Sarah.

"Speaking of whom?" asked Colonel Clairlowe.

"Of Mr. Emmersly, sir."

"Mr. Emmersly, my child—why, what do you know of him?"

"Why, really nothing at all," replied the prattling girl.

"You do know something about him," retorted George. "No one I have ever seen with such gray eyes and white teeth. Villiers used to tell us," George continued, with a look

full of sad remembrance, "that Mr. Emmersly was always very handsome and very wicked, and that nobody liked him now, because he had been false to his friends and treacherous to his foes."

Colonel and Mrs. Clairlowe exchanged glances of entire surprise. Many other discrepancies in the life of Brook Emmersly were elicited from the annals of the nurse, traditionally reported by the children.

The subject was then discontinued; and, in listening to the sweet notes of Lady Wilverton's rich voice, the fond Gertrude remembered only that her heart had fixed its future happiness on bygone memories, too passionately loved to fade or be forgotten.

"Sing that song for me once, Aunt Marianne—the song you taught Miss Herberton. I hear the chimes, and have but ten more minutes to remain," said George, repeating his entreaty.

Imperceptibly to all, save one, their party received an additional guest.

Lodwick Clairlowe had stolen to Miss Grey's side, breathlessly listening to each tone of the thrilling voice, inwardly denouncing Ida Deschamps for attempting to detain him from such sweet sounds; and beginning to think his time wasted in thus absenting himself from the Rectory.

The comical description his friend at Akbar House had given him of the pedantic abbess sort of person, and the misanthrope of a brother, both proudly conceited—having appended to their heels a nephew and niece of extraordinary precocity, very considerably diminished his anxiety to victimize himself, as Ida termed the fulfilment of his promise to the guests of the good Rector.

"Incomprehensible girl!" thought he, surveying the actualities before him, and listening to the gentle lady-like performer, "what could induce her to commit such treason upon truth?"

"Miss Deschamps can do nothing like that,"

he murmured, till reminded by the pale girl before him that silence must be kept if he wished to hear the song throughout. The sounds at length were hushed, glad welcomes succeeded, and the two orphans were introduced. "What beautiful little creatures! Oh, Ida, your description was indeed imperfect!"

"Ida Deschamps sings well," said Lodwick, "but neither in voice nor style approaches your beautiful friend, my mother."

"Ida Deschamps! my dear boy. Ida does nothing that pleases me, nothing *well* ——"

"Pardon me, she has been well taught!"

"And better practised, if one may judge from the skilful management of her looks."

"Mother, dear mother mine, you are growing censorious."

"Yes, really, mamma; you seldom speak severely," rejoined Mary.

"Poor Ida," murmured a gentle voice.

"Why 'poor Ida,' Gertrude?"

"I know not why, Mr. Clairlowe!"

"For mercy's sake, do not employ my patronymic unnecessarily, Miss Grey," said the young soldier, looking vexedly on his cousin.

"Lodwick, let it be then, and I will return to my old privilege," she replied; "but really you have grown so tall and sun-burnt, I scarcely knew if the comparatively old woman dare venture upon so terrible a liberty."

"Never dissemble, sweet Gertry, to please me; I am not pleased by it; I see clearly I need not flatter myself that you thought at all about it."

A sigh was the response.

"Miss Deschamps," continued Lodwick, "is very much improved of late, and Count Estalles assured me she had been the unrivalled belle of two seasons."

"I suppose she has not yet decided to accept the Count?" asked Mary, "or, peradventure, some wealthier lover wears her trophies now?"

"Cruel sister! she appears innocent of any charge of fickleness."

"She has one warm and generous advocate," observed Lady Wilverton.

"And in a worthier cause he might win a fresher wreath," added the Colonel; "we do not love Ida now, as we did seven years ago; the continent has worked evils in her naturally kind heart. Have a care, my son,

> "The heart betrayed, too late observes the snare."

"Never fear for me, sir; Ida is an agreeable companion, but, by the Lord Harry, I should go to war with Fate if I fancied she doomed Miss Deschamps for my wife."

"Bravo, my boy!" ejaculated the father; "no, no! never let her wear the motto of my house."

During the preceding dialogue, Beverley Dentnoris amused himself by turning over the leaves of an ancient music-book.

"Miss Clairlowe," asked the Rector, "do you

ever sing any of these remarkably beautiful old ballads?"

Mary glanced at the familiar melodies, whispering audibly, "It is so long a time since I sang before Lodwick, that I am frightened at the ordeal; for I remember he is a most inexorable critic."

"And Mary never disappointed me in affording ample materials," replied the brother, fondly; "but you must discontinue this sad habit of blushing over head and ears; strangers would take me for your lover."

It was but a thought, a vague, yet an encouraged thought, that Lodwick and Harold Dentnoris very much resembled each other.

The song was sung with that deep pathos, which, occasionally, when the voice has neither richness nor sweetness, sinks to the soul, and subdues louder plaudits.

Lodwick knew the value of his praise, and a fervent touch of his lips on the brow of the performer brought glistening tell-tales to the soft eyes beneath.

Who hath not felt that mutely expressed commendation!

"There is one circumstance which gratifies, satisfies, yet astonishes me, lady," said the Colonel.

"And what may that be, dear sir?"

"Simply this; Lieut. Clairlowe's last visit to Akbar House seems pretty considerably to have enhanced his appreciation of home enjoyments. I, for my part, momentarily expect to hear that he prefers his present companions to 'The girl he left behind him.'"

"Yes, a man unaccustomed to artificial manners does not easily acquire a relish for them," observed the son; "and I am afraid Mr. Locke would find my blank-paper mind filled too completely to receive any new impression quite so instantaneously. Of course, the scratching out of any otherwise ineradicable prepossession might give space for change, but the newly conceived notions must occupy more than thirty hours in maturing, so that

Miss Deschamps' 'put on' gravities and gaieties have small charm for me!"

"Although," added Lady Wilverton, "they are an immense improvement sometimes."

"Granted! but you understand what I would say—give me an ingenuous mind, and such a smile as this," exclaimed Lodwick, parting a stray curl on the neck of his sister, from the chain that entangled it, gazing at the same moment on the lips whence the smile proceeded.

The evening closed, and all retired to rest. Miss Clairlowe's maid had just loosened the bands of her mistress's hair, when a knock at the door, and "May I come in?" was followed by the actual presence of Lodwick, who, praying for a few moments' chat, by way of soporific, took his seat by his sister's side, a privileged and welcome intruder.

"Has not this been a long day?" said she, patiently submitting to the sundry "pulls" inflicted by her sleepy abigail.

"A long day, dearest?"

"Yes, a fatiguing day," added the tired girl; "the seeing people one has not seen for so many years—so opposite as they are, too, to the people Ida Deschamps caricatured them as being. Then the long ride to the darling Grange ——"

"Have you, then, seen the Herbertons?" interrupted her listener; "do they live far hence? and is Charlotte at home? Lord Delvor, is he there?"

"What a string of questions! however, I mean to answer them all in due succession. Charlotte is with Lady Loder in Italy. Lord Delvor *ubique!* Lady Wilverton says he is a constant guest here whenever he remains any time in the neighbourhood, so I shall see the conquering hero at last! and think, Lody, how singular that the introduction should take place at the market town of ——, of all this earth's odd corners. I am told he is blindly anxious to consummate the bond with the fair lady of his love, but that 'La belle fiancée' is not equally so."

"You recollect the poor dejected Hugh

Matlin; he is about to marry his ugly friend the 'Millionaire,' to whom he was pledged years ago. You must also remember her exemplary conduct, when his breach of faith was revealed, and the offer to Miss Herberton publicly spoken of, coupled, of course, with her rejection of his hand.

"Such a hand! no wonder the appearance of its nearer proximity alarmed the excessively refined divinity; but let that be as it may, the conduct of one lady on the occasion recalled the truant infidel to his old allegiance, and to the surprise of all the world, his ugly friend pardoned and reaccepted his devotion.

"Charlotte's other flame, who married kind Ellen Maltby, is dead: he died six weeks after the birth of little Charles.

"Ellen still declares that her husband never wandered from his first and only love; she is a sweet gentle woman," said Mary, rising from her chair, and dismissing her domestic. "I wish I could become acquainted with her. She

who could devote her life to the man she loved, without a reason to hope a requital for her heart's enduring sacrifice, perfectly aware that he would thanklessly relinquish her kindness, and clasp another form, and confess a dearer love, oh, she must be worthy of esteem!

"He married to please his father, and did not explain his prior attachment until delirium betrayed it—yet no murmur ever escaped the lips of that true wife.

"Lady Herberton cannot prevail on her to attend Charlotte's wedding.

"Little Charlie's christening was a heart-rending scene; by Mr. Bacon's desire, the clergyman performed the ceremony at the bed-side of the dying man, while he himself faintly pronounced the name of 'Charlotte.'

"Mrs. Bacon, wishing to prevent the discovery of his relapse, and trembling lest any contradiction should agitate him farther, took his hand, when he, clasping hers, convulsively pointed to the infant, murmuring 'Charl—.'

'His name is Charles,' exclaimed the earnest woman; and the ceremony was completed ere she perfectly recovered from her disappointment; the boy's name was to have been Edward, that of her husband. She felt the presentiment of a fatal termination to the harrowing regret so plainly dragging life away, and longed to have one certain proof that, in spite of every *contretems*, she still possessed his child. Yet thus, at the moment of their last earthly leave-taking, she was again reminded of her utter valuelessness to him—poor struggling victim of so much love. When Mrs. Bacon looked again on the form so idolized, she met no more his bright, clear, liquid eyes, and the dull film of death shaded them from her sight for ever—his features rigid in insensate death. She fainted, for he was lost for ever.

"Poor creature! well, do not let us hear any more of lovers just now, Mary; not at least such bad histories, salutary though they be—

yet to my mind such abject devotion amounts to pusillanimity."

"Oh, Lodwick, do not say so; we feel constrained to admire an elevated mind thus raised above the common sin of selfishness, surmounting even the most venial, though usually unconquerable, frailties of our nature."

Little did Lodwick Clairlowe anticipate a like episode to be recorded in his own heart hereafter.

"What are the arrangements for to-morrow?" again interrupted the brother. "I should like to ride over to the Grange; will you accompany me, Mary?"

"I really cannot say, until I hear what my dear mother's wishes are. I know we dine there at six, but I am so accustomed to fall into her arrangements, without the trouble of building plans for myself, that I am afraid I stand a chance of remaining a simple child all my life."

Mary then related the incidents of the day.

Lodwick sighed. "I wish Gertrude Grey had never seen that serpent Emmersly; yet how can his concerns interest Lady Wilverton? Mystery! mystery! all mystery with that apostate; yet methinks I do remember hearing something of a little nephew whom Sir Taunton Wilverton adopted, or had charge of, or something of the sort; but have you discovered, among the most incalculable truths of this world, whether young Dentnoris's illegitimacy has been proved?"

"Lady Herberton tells me it is confirmed beyond a question," replied his blushing sister, "and admires both the Rector and Aunt Marianne more for their exclusive fondness, nay, even proved affection, to the orphans; and do they not look full of love, when introducing the children to strangers? Really, when I think of George and the sweet Sarah ——,"

"And no other member of their family? Pray, what has the secretary done to merit your forgetfulness?"

"Yes, Mr. Harold Dentnoris as well, then, dear Lody."

Who shall interrogate the fond memory hovering through scenes past, in which Harold had made that young heart his own, even before he felt how fixed and inseparable his thoughts were for her?

"I really mistrust my senses sometimes, so perfectly assured am I that their rights will be proved, when the circumstances of the case are more carefully examined," said Mary.

"I am afraid the present Lord Dentnoris has gone deep into them already. People say he was anxious to establish his nephew's claim; but how horridly vexatious it is on Harold's account. Our mother has rendered me quite familiar with the name, you hear."

A silence of several minutes followed the discussion of the subject so deeply interesting, till Mary interrupted it by observing, "Do not you think, from the character of Lord Dentnoris, that he was too proud a man to in-

volve his dearest treasures in the calamity the world lays to his charge? Lady Dentnoris, too, was a woman of infinite pride; so, is it probable, humanly speaking, that they would have omitted any ceremony, by the disregard of which their children's respectability could be forfeited?"

"Oh, Mary dear, good night! and God grant you may ever remain thus unacquainted with the chronicles of man's selfishness. Good night, dear girl."

CHAPTER VIII.

> "How dear! might that sweet season last,
> In which our first love-dream is past,
> Ere doubts, and cares, and jealous pain,
> Are flaws in the heart's diamond chain."
>
> L. E. L.

"MARIANNE, I wish you would observe the destruction of your own, if not of my property," exclaimed the Rector. "See! you have not only poured the coffee over your dress, but also into my plate, which anything but improves the flavour of the roll; the cloth is covered too, and the letters!"

"Oh! save the letters!" entreated Lady Wilverton, as she hastily prayed assistance to prevent their laving in the brown stream. This dreaded mischief, however, was quickly averted,

and the superscription of each well-known correspondent immediately recognised—the "B. E." in the corner of one too certainly indicating the writer's name, while Gertrude Grey's flitting colour betrayed the mysterious intensity of feeling so incomprehensible to the widow, who, as she looked on the disquieting envelope, anticipated no great pleasure from its contents.

Miss Grey, the only one unwritten to of the party, pondered silently over the seeming loneliness of her orphan lot, little understanding the real secrets of a history for the most part concealed from her.

Her father, when quite a youth, clandestinely married the daughter of an Italian vocalist. For a few short years love lent them energy to support unrepiningly the first experience of poverty, till the inflexibility of her grand-parent's resentment fully evinced itself. Not content with the mere disinheriting of his unfortunate son, he added bitter denunciations against the wife. A few lingering weeks of

sickening despondency, and Henry Grey's remains were permitted, by the still relentless parent, to be gathered to his forefathers in the family vault.

The sudden termination of her husband's painful journey on earth, her distance from brighter Italy, and utter destitution, with the trifling exception of two shillings a day, speedily accomplished Death's commands, summoning the wife to follow her husband.

They laid her in a lone uncouth grave, and the loved and beautiful was soon forgotten by the few who, in her first days of wedded happiness, contributed small pittances for the young bride's dowry.

Before her last sad sigh escaped, the infant Gertrude was conveyed to the care of Mrs. Clairlowe by a trusty messenger, accompanied by the following note, her child's only testament:—

"Dear Madam,

"My husband's father and yours were sol-

diers in the same battle-field; and, consoled by this single thought, I die. Take my baby-girl to your heart; mould her to your will; let her not yearn for us, nor hear our faults upbraided. God will thus bountifully reward the unrepining admission of the penalty He imposed. He has brought us to the grave. Save our child. I know not what I write; my eyes are dim in tears and death. I see my child; she clings to this attenuated frame. I bless you—bless my baby, while the cold finger of decay traces the vision of my coming tomb. My child, farewell! Her bright eyes will bring me back to life!—I die!

"TRAVISA GREY."

Such confidence had not been misplaced, and the little Gertrude soon became familiar and happy with the merry hearts around her. Nevertheless, a longing for the beloved smiles of parents so suddenly removed, and the "wherefore" was she left thus isolated, paled her young brow, and shed a melancholy over her,

irresistibly attractive to her friends, and sadly illustrative of the history of her life. But a portion of her father's misfortunes had been revealed, leaving poor Gertrude only partially aware of the full amount of gratitude she owed to the relations assembled at —— Rectory.

Mrs. Clairlowe at length broke the silence, by remarking that, as her niece appeared to be the only one disengaged, she might perform a great service for her by reading a letter from Lady Loder. "And, Mary," continued she, "do not be too elated by the news you will presently hear." The thoughtful Gertrude instantly abandoned her meditation to accept the well-timed duty, and read as follows:—

"My Dear Mrs. Clairlowe,

"The Herbertons and their party promised to spend the Easter week with us at Loder, *Deo volente.* This fact precedes the object of my letter, as it will, I hope, do duty as a bribe, and insure an affirmative for our

petition — 'Will you and yours join our circle?'

"Percy, whom you have never seen, has brought home three beautiful horses. The white barb is for Miss Clairlowe's use, I hear, —that is, if you can be good enough to accept our unceremonious invitation. He spends half his time in training it; and, for my sake and what his mother loves, this is done, as I have not yet seen her rival.

"My Percy, too; my poor heart dreads the time when this delicious feeling will not, cannot, be so undividedly mine. He is now only twenty, and his past travels have not spoiled my boy. He seems full of us and home. Miss Grey, if she will so far honour him, is to have the use of 'Jet.'

"With the kindest recollections to you and yours from our trio, believe me, my dear Mrs. Clairlowe, Yours,

BELLA LODER."

"P.S.—I wish those amiable friends of the

Herbertons would augment our happiness by meeting you. An invitation is already written, but I feel slightly scrupulous about sending it. If you think I dare venture so far on our short acquaintance, I will post it."

"What a kind, silly old woman it is!" exclaimed Colonel Clairlowe. "Mary, my dear, she wants a wife for her Percy; any objection, eh?"

"Nay, papa, do not anticipate the attack," replied his daughter, smiling in turn; "maybe he will make you an excellent son-in-law—if ——"

"No 'ifs,' Mary," added Lodwick; "how singularly everything happens for my advantage—all my wishes thus easily gratified; but from whom is your letter, sister mea?"

"Look," observed Miss Clairlowe, holding up a perfumed sheet, filled with the flippant characters of Ida Deschamps' pen, "from your Euphrosyne!"

"Mine! well, I like that. Good bye; I am off to the Grange!"

"I am afraid the contents of my despatches will prove uninteresting to all but Beverley," said Lady Wilverton. "You must know, my dear brother, that Sir Oakington is dead, and Brook has succeeded to the baronetcy."

"Indeed! how has he left his son? wealthy?"

"Fifteen hundred a year, with the Hall; this last, however, it appears, Sir Brook resigns in favour of his mother, during her life. Read the letter, it will explain every circumstance."

"Had you not a *protégé* of that name, Lady Wilverton, if the question be not impertinent?" asked Colonel Clairlowe.

"I had, dear sir; but many years since he cast aside the acquaintance."

"Then this Mr. Emmersly must be the same person we know."

"Now Sir Brook Emmersly," replied the aunt.

"Yet may I, too, evince the curiosity I have to hear how you became acquainted?"

"And I," ejaculated Lodwick, "burn to hear the whole truth."

"The truth, then," said Lady Wilverton, is as follows ——"

"Nay, Marianne, I can better relate the circumstances connected with your wild and bygone schemes. My sister, Mrs. Clairlowe, thought herself capable of controlling, unassisted, the mad spirits of an Oxonian. The achievement defied her anticipations; and, much to her disappointment, he scampered off, first to Germany, then to India, then, on furlough, or sick-certificate, returned to his much-admired Venice, paying his Aunt Marianne a flying visit, which, proving anything but satisfactory, he was off again; and I believe, from this letter, he must purpose a repetition of his travels, as well as a brief stay in his native land."

Poor Gertrude! vainly had Mrs. Clairlowe's

kind heart invented excuses to obtain the absence of her niece from this explanation, and, lest it should be prolonged, she requested the trembling girl to accompany her to prepare for their early ride.

"Does this said Sir Brook return immediately?" inquired Lodwick, hastily, as his mother and cousin left the room.

"No; after all, he simply alludes to the probability of his appearance at the marriage of his old flame, Miss Herberton."

"Do you know that he proposed to Gertrude, and has treated her perfidiously? at least, though the world may not think so, I do."

"And she has rejected him, I hope?" said the Colonel, warmly.

"We never mention the subject now, and I humbly beg pardon for having said so much. However, I can see that neither of you admire him, for not a word of commendation have you spoken; and when Dentris threw the letter on the table, I think

it was not done with the air of augmented happiness."

Mary listened breathlessly; Lady Wilverton's pallor increased.

For Brook, had he not ventured to refer to scenes of agitating annoyance? had he not also stated his motive for communicating the advancement of his fortunes to her, hoping it might assist his single wish in life, at the same moment that the wasting Gertrude languished in her fond devotedness?

"Perfidious to such a splendid girl," thought Lodwick; "a girl faultless and beautiful, free from the shackles of worldly vanity. May the good Fates prosper me, I love her too." Then, with a sigh not quite disconsolate, he le a upon his spirited horse, and quitted the is- tory on a visit to his early friends. om

"This little note," continued Lady W is ton, "contains an important share of info tion. I think I told you, Colonel Clairlo that I had been fortunate enough to let W

verton Abbey on lease to the lay rector, Sir William Belton; and herein," said she, looking on the billet, "I am requested to grant an interview concerning the change of entrance to the turret and observatory."

"When will he call?" inquired her brother.

"At any hour I appoint."

"Let it be two or three o'clock; I have particular and urgent engagements after the latter hour."

"May-be you expect a lover in disguise, Dentnoris?" said the Colonel.

"No, far otherwise, I assure you; Sir William is an 'Ancient,' with a number of daughters."

the [illegible] excellent wife still living, would have
" [illegible]riefer argument against the notion,
I h[illegible]," said his sister.
much [illegible]ust confess that the first impression
of y[illegible] the announcement of Sir William
me[illegible]on, as the servant threw open the drawing-

room door, was extremely opposite to the description of the good Rector. In lieu of the gray-haired "Ancient," Lord Delvor introduced his friend Sir William, son of the baronet lately deceased. Eighteen months previously he had breathed his last at Malta.

The world did not universally award admiration to the countenance of Sir William, the paleness of which was increased by the shade of black heavy curls, the dark moustache, and the long fringed eyes of that most intense blue into which one looks untiringly as they vary with each new emotion; now deeply dark, now brightly blue. A figure, tall and handsomely proportioned, bent with the languor of ill health, accompanied by a voice of earnest thoughtfulness, prepossessed as much as astonished the inmates of —— Rectory, nor could the merry old soldier forbear throwing one glance of mystical import to Lady Wilverton after the introduction.

The contemplated alterations were pro-

nounced to be most essential improvements, and the gentlemen had no sooner departed than, to the satisfaction of Colonel Clairlowe, he was enabled to state the confirmation of his opinion, that the stranger was, without doubt, a lover in disguise.

Lady Wilverton laughed at his jesting, while Lodwick, tired and disconcerted, entered at the moment of an animated eulogy upon Lord Delvor, only to find himself a second time defeated in his attempt to meet him. He had ridden fast towards the Grange, then back to the Rectory, and, weary with the repeated disappointment, flung himself on a couch in the library.

His dreamings were interrupted by the unexpected arrival of Harold Dentnoris, who, ill and dispirited, walked unheralded into the room. Lodwick Clairlowe started from his recumbent attitude, pleading he scarcely knew what or wherefore, in extenuation of his idle

lounge; begged the visitor to be seated, offering at the same time to summon Mr. Dentnoris.

"I thank you," remarked the smiling intruder, "I will, myself, seek Lady Wilverton; but here she is!" exclaimed the nephew, grasping the hand of his aunt, and carrying it to his lips.

Lodwick remained an inactive spectator of the denouement, till Lady Wilverton, remembering they had not met before, pronounced the usual introduction.

"Ah! I am most glad to see you, Mr. Dentnoris," cried the warm-hearted lieutenant; "my cousin has described you with perfect accuracy, and if I may, I do at once seek your acquaintance by this privilege," said he, extending his hand.

Harold willingly accepted the proffered pledge, with a sympathetic gesture which neither time nor absence ever obliterated.

"Who are your other guests, Lady Wilverton? Surely I cannot be mistaken, it is—"

"Mrs. Clairlowe and the Colonel," rejoined the widow.

"Yes, precisely, but the ladies in riding-dresses?"

"Their daughter and niece, Harold; I recollect you met them at Venice."

"Let us join them," said the brother; "I am sure they will be only too glad of an opportunity to shake you by the hand again, and I am equally gratified to have the start of them once to-day, at all events."

His predictions were fully verified; and a happy glance of astonished delight from the blushing Mary, whispered consolation to one beating bosom.

"Yet," thought he, "why keep the treasured memories of old so jealously within my breast? Why had not blind prophecy stayed their first hallowed thoughts and hopes? Then,

I knew not the bitter poison awaiting me—felt not the curse of illegitimacy. Down, then, wild aspirings! down to the depth of my lonesome soul. No, I dare not; if, when unalloyed happiness glanced before my future—if, then, I could not trust myself to speak my love, how may my voice presume to form a beggar's prayer, and offer a sullied reputation and no name, to her, or look upon her form even with a brother's love."

"Harold!" said a gentle child-like tone, arousing him from his brief reverie,—"Harold!" He turned and gazed upon the lovely little sister, yet unknown to him.

"And is that George who helped Miss Grey to dismount?" asked the brother, as he caught the sweet Sarah to his yearning heart.

"Yes, Harold, and we have talked of you until we did everything but see you. Both George and I continually besought Aunt Marianne to tell us of our brother, and now

you are really here, I can scarcely believe it; but you look afraid of us all."

Harold Dentnoris insensibly acknowledged the beatitude of home; imperceptibly the joyfulness of his friends crept into his mind, and bade him rejoice, even without joy. The confirmation of his illegitimacy had wholly overpowered him; had changed his genuine happiness to gloom, and curdled every memory into gall. Bitter, bitter retrospect! the unavoidable blame commingling with the remembrance of a parent's love.

Their former intimacy had been slight, but Mary Clairlowe had chronicled his looks, his words, and every sigh, in the volume of her young life's records.

CHAPTER IX.

"Sorrow
Would be a rarity most beloved, if all
Could so become it."—KING LEAR.

"Oh, many a shaft at random sent,
Finds mark the archer little meant;
And many a word at random spoken,
May soothe, or wound, a heart that's broken!"

THE voice of Mrs. Clairlowe, inquiring for the young ladies, hastened the clasping of Miss Grey's second bracelet, who, delighted for once to be prepared to attend a first summons, quickly withdrew her arm from the satisfied maid, and descended to the drawing-room.

A robe of ruby velvet reflected a warm hue over her clear white complexion, and lighted up her pale brow almost to the tinge of health.

A ruby bandeau, interspersed with ruby stars bound her black braided hair, and gave a bright happy expression to her calm eyes, as she glided into the presence of her aunt.

Miss Clairlowe was about to make an earnest observation, when her mother drawing her aside, whispered—"Not now, my love, not now; it would distress her. I feel convinced she is not aware of it—it is a mistake of Langdon's."

The carriages rolled heavily from the door, leaving Harold, who had declined joining the party, more than doubly mournful, and alone. A moment for the indulgence of his sorrow, and again the love of kindred prevailed. He listened to the pealing laugh of his little sister—heard their merry "Good nights,"—the kiss!—He could no longer repel the consolitary ideas crowding, despite himself, into his bosom, bidding him cull the few sweets left in the enjoyment of pure unselfish love—and well did the peaceful after-hour reward him.

"I thought you were gone to the Grange," cried Sarah.

"And I thought I heard Aunt Marianne wish you to go, Harold," exclaimed Georgy, in a tone of surprise.

"And you, I suppose, very properly think such a wish from Aunt Marianne tantamount to a command, dear boy?" answered Harold.

"Of course! if my aunt wishes me to do anything, I would not give her the trouble of commanding me,—I always think her wish sufficient."

"Oh, but Harold is different from us, Georgy dear; he is a man, — and men are able to know everything good for themselves as well as Uncle Beverley;—at least uncle has told me they ought to do so."

"A homily on obedience;—upon my word, Sally, you are very clever to find such sterling arguments in my defence—but Georgy also is right—and when I can attend to it, the command of Aunt Marianne is uttered in the wish."

The request to see his horses and dogs on the morrow, gave our hero something to look forward to, independent of the melancholy question of inheritance. Small are the coincidences which either attract us towards, or repel us from, the pleasures of this earth.

Harold returned to his chamber, where again the wounded spirit sought its luckless theme, reverting to his father, his mother, their English home, left so early, and mourned so long, till kindly weariness overcame him, and the bitterness of memory was for a time subdued.

In the hall of the old-fashioned Grange, a string of venerable domestics welcomed their favourite, Lady Wilverton; and in a few moments the party gathered round the blazing hearth of the Herbertons.

Dinner was shortly announced, and Mary found herself led to table by their agreeable visitor of the morning.

"There is something exquisitely graceful

in the walk of Lady Wilverton," observed Sir William Belton,—" a majesty of motion scarcely describable."

"That is not a chief perfection," rejoined Miss Clairlowe, "she is altogether perfect."

"My fellow traveller, Mr. Harold Dentnoris, is of course known to you, Miss Clairlowe?"

"Oh, yes!" replied the confused girl—"we have known him slightly."

"And like him?"

"Yes, he was a great favourite with papa."

Sir William had put the question for the sake of saying something connected with the family.

"I have heard him frequently speak of Colonel Clairlowe," continued the Baronet, "and on one occasion a gentleman present grew most vociferous in praise of his daughter."

Mary's thoughts had wandered off to commune with the spirit of the past; she did not,

therefore, immediately respond to the observations.

"You have no curiosity, Miss Clairlowe, or you would testify a little interest in the name of the person I alluded to."

"Yes! Oh, yes! I am of a most inquisitive disposition; do, I intreat you, allow me to hear the name of your friend."

"No friend—No! It was Sir Brook Emmersly!"

"Indeed!" quickly rejoined Mary Clairlowe, perceiving the startled countenance of her cousin, and rather willing to hazard a return to the former subject, than hear the prohibited name again. "But whence did you travel in company with Mr. Harold Dentnoris?"

"From Venice to Staines, a few miles from London. We met at General Deschamps', and I have been using my utmost endeavours to extort the promise of a visit from him; but,

notwithstanding my assiduity, he perversely withholds even the shadow of a pledge. I would like to see my sisters, who are quieter than any quakeresses in Europe, pull caps for so attractive a conquest,—yet, perchance, he pursues the wiser system, and will not attempt to break their hearts in unrequited love."

Mary felt half disposed to be indignant, yet a moment's reflection restored her self-possession. Harold Dentnoris had never breathed a thought of love to her—they had exchanged no look of love—then why the tacit acknowledgment—why in Mary Clairlowe's heart did there exist a sacred, a profound fellowship towards the illegitimate? These ideas flitted rapidly through her mind, and occupied scarcely an instant, ere she replied by asking,

"Has Mr. Dentnoris determined, then, to live and die a bachelor?"

"On the contrary, I think he is smitten irrecoverably by a very charming English-

woman—not the one I would have selected for him."

"Abroad?" faltered his attentive listener.

"Yes! At Venice I saw them together."

"Beautiful, is she?"

"Why no! — yes — questionably so. She has, however, stolen his heart, I fear."

Not so!—thought Miss Clairlowe, Harold is too proud to marry now—dear Harold!

"They are solemn and low, and none can hear
The whispers that come to memory's ear."

And Mary pondered sadly, despite her resolute philosophy.

The spirit of the captivating girl refused to credit the engagement of Harold Dentnoris with an avowed flirt, for well she understood the allusions of Sir William. No, thought she, I will not admit such a censure on his taste. Thus reassuring herself, Mary turned, inquiring if he had any more information, with regard to his sisters, to give her, as she longed for an introduction to them.

"Shall we hear Lady Wilverton sing to-night?" asked he, evidently engaged in meditating on a subject quite distinct from the interrogation that moment uttered.

"I hope so; it would be very unusual to allow a social evening to pass without a song from her."

There were but few ladies in the drawing-room, when the door opened to admit Sir William Belton, whose ears were at the same instant greeted by the soft low tones of the beautiful Aunt Marianne, as she gave life to the words of Mrs. Norton's "*Blind Man's Bride.*"

Charles Bacon sat opposite, gazing vacantly upon the face of the performer. The music ceased, and not until the party were all fairly laughing at the young boy's absence of mind, did he perceive how extraordinary his manner must appear to those unacquainted with the train of his ruminations.

"I have only been thinking," said he, "of

the last time I heard that song; how differently it sounded. Ida Deschamps forced Mr. Emmersly to sing it over three times one night—I thought it was a love song; I was so sleepy, I could scarcely keep my eyes open; but as they asked me to stay, of course I felt obliged to do so. Mr. Dentnoris having (Ida *said*) left the room in a fit of his unaccountable jealousy; but that was not intended for me to hear, and when he was gone I was the only other man left."

"The only other what?" said his mother.

"The only other gentleman," answered Charles, indignantly; "at all events, I was forced to do duty for one that night, although I could not succeed well enough to clasp her bracelet; I could not bear her."

"Fie! fie!" interrupted his mother; "there are several gentlemen here, therefore you may be exempt from the duty of a critic to-night."

"But, mamma, she always would call me 'Charles, love;' pshaw!" cried the boy, em-

phatically, "I hate her loud singing and staring eyes."

Eleven o'clock arrived, and the guests departed. Gertrude's heart, the one aching thing among that crowd, had burned to hear the ambiguous tales of her lover's gallantry, yet, hoping on in hopelessness, her mind regained its serenity. She dwelt upon the past, and in the present acknowledged no type of that by-gone happiness. She credited not his infidelity, nor forbade her lonely bosom to dream of joyful days to come, of many a merry hour in store, when once again she should see him, warm, passionate, and smiling at her feet.

Mary Clairlowe's thoughts were dancing through the zodiac of her loved hemisphere, having heartily enjoyed the scene of gladness past. She was but hastening from one affectionate band to meet the original of a portrait, contained within her memory for aye!

Lodwick was enveloping his cousin in a warm shawl, as they bade the final good night to Lady Herberton, and drawing her arm within his own, observed—

"Nothing ever felt so cold as this dark night; really, Gertrude, it is necessary for you to have something more than the glow of rubies in your hair, to secure your head from this biting cold."

"Rubies in my hair!" exclaimed Miss Grey, raising her hand to test the accuracy of the statement. A chill shudder ran through her frame.

Lodwick laughed at her alarm; he never had seen her dressed more becomingly. Still, even when he smiled, a vague apprehension that Sir Brook might be in some way connected with the brilliant gems, checked his mirth, and in silence and deep sorrow the agitated girl entered the carriage, painfully musing upon the inattention to her toilet.

"The book" had lost its interest with others; to Gertrude Grey alone it proved the sacred companion.

All things are hallowed in proportion to the purity of our affections for them, and this new-found treasure was, she believed, the only thing near her on which his eyes, the eyes of a denounced lover, had rested, in which his hand had traced the pencil-marks. Oh, there is joy in memories like this! It rendered her insensible to the dull realities of our work-a-day world, and permitted her maid unrestrained freedom to deck the abundant tresses of her patient mistress, in the style she herself preferred.

Vainly had Mrs. Clairlowe lectured the young girl upon her negligence on former occasions; but, thought Gertrude, those "mistakes" were really "negligences;" this—Oh, what must my poor aunt think!—surely she has abandoned all hope of reforming me, alas!

And have none who will read these pages, felt the acute sense of having unwarily inflicted

on a tender loving heart a misgiving like to that Gertrude knew her gentle aunt would suffer—unable, at the moment of discovery, to unload the heavy secret, and by one look of sincere contrition, meet half the pardon it implored? Miss Grey had to dwell upon the sad explanation before her. Are there none who can paint the wretchedness entailed by recurrence to a word or deed, renounced, or pledged to be avoided for the sake of one beloved friend?—Not one who has felt the thrilling disappointment arising from ill-starred devotion, from ruined hope, racking jealousy, and the dominion of the heart's stubborn doomed affections?

Perhaps some of the few who may chance to travel with me through these histories, may recal a time when the hot tear of feverish excitement gathered, yet dropped not from their eyes, as the strong appeal of memory was hurled from its dear confidingness into the abyss of harrowing, indignant sorrow, with a thousand

wherefores to excuse the fault, or lessen the burthen in the mind. Useless are such stratagems, they but bewilder, never, never tranquillize.

Lodwick's emphatic—"We are at home," dispelled the musings both of his sister and cousin, and Gertrude's unresisting hand again rested on the arm of the military aspirant, who tenderly besought her to tremble less, and look one smile upon her cavalier.

"Do! ere you quit me to join my mother. She evidently waits for you, Gertry," added he, turning to receive the boon he prayed for, in a tone of glad warmth. The eyes that but one short hour ago had glanced in day-beam brightness, were glistening still, but only in their fulness of sad tears; their brilliant beauty was fast dulling as the head drooped, and in powerless emotion the frail form sank from the support of her cousin. In one moment his manly grasp caught the fainting girl.

Lodwick had never witnessed the semblance of female death before—he had seen men fall

and die, had heard their dying wishes, and the throat's gurgling token of approaching dissolution; but he had never seen a woman faint: thus the feelings of unutterable misery with which he gazed on the clearly chiselled features of the statue-like Gertrude, mastered each reasoning thought, and bursting through every channel of suppressed affection, he prayed her to unclose those "eyes," more than sun's light to him.

Mrs. Clairlowe watched with anxiety the irrepressible emotion of her beloved son; surprised and almost lamenting the avowal of his feeling for the deserted and once elect bride of Sir Brook Emmersly. The sloe-fringed lids at length were lifted up, and Lodwick saw with intense pleasure the eyes' softened richness resting upon his.

Miss Grey shared her aunt's dormitory, and long ere morning broke, her mind reverted in dismay to the incident of the previous night.

The birds had sung their matin hymn, the day-flowers of the conservatory opened their fragrant petals, while soothing breezes sounded less mournfully in their wintry moan, as Mrs. Clairlowe parted the heavy curtains which concealed the invalid.

" I am not sleeping, aunt," murmured the faltering accents of poor Gertrude, who rose to anticipate the dear embrace, and in the arms now open to receive her, make the deep confession of the " last mistake."

" Dearest aunt, have you forgiven me? Well you know it was my idleness, inattention, anything but forgetfulness of your admonitions, that caused his bandeau to encircle my brow again; I knew not that one gift remained, until the moment of re-entering the carriage yesternight. In future, trust me, dear aunt, I will be less abstracted. Cannot you forgive my poor rejected heart for hallowing some glad memories? I remembered only when first I wore the ruby dress; we all were happy then,

aunt. Even his gift, offered in part of his admiration of it,—even that was forgotten. I held little Sarah's book, and tried to feel he still might turn, and seek me once again. In this casket," continued Miss Grey, delivering a morocco case into Mrs. Clairlowe's hand, "lies the relic of his gifts to me; return it, my kind aunt,—return it to Mr. Emmersly."

The utterance of the name, and the energetic flow of her rapid confession, overpowered the pallid sufferer. Mrs. Clairlowe would have spared the prolonged revelation, but hoped the unburthening of her distress might relieve a weary heart.

"Calm yourself, my darling child; I never for one moment doubted you, my Gertry. I knew my little girl had not heart enough to have a look that was not born of fondness, from her aunt," said the generous old lady, smiling a heavenly balsam to the soul of the orphan; "and I was equally certain that Gertrude Grey loved me. We never wilfully offend those

whose love is grateful to us; the link once severed thus, is but a mended one afterwards; and though its external worth appears to be uninjured, the sterling value of the gold is diminished. I recollect that you, my love, had written this to me long months ago, and felt assured of your entire ignorance of the glittering ornament in your hair last night; at least, I was certain you remembered not from whom the one you wore was received. Yet, my Gertrude, though no doubt of your love for us could enter our minds, still, think how anxiously we long for you to dissipate even the hope of an union with Sir Brook Emmersly."

"Ah, yes! he is Sir Brook now—different and changed, perhaps," said Miss Grey, unconsciously.

"Listen to me, my child; you are surrounded by unquestionable proofs of his unworthiness."

Gertrude shuddered.

"He may not have forgotten you," conti-

nued the aunt, "yet, has he not slighted you? Have you not been neglected for others more interesting to him?"

"Oh, my dear aunt, how you wring my heart. I will forget! forget!"

"Religion, dear child, he hath derided; calumniated your best friends; outraged every propriety. We fain would think better of him for your sake; but, believe me, my love, he cares not to accomplish your 'happiness!' Sir Brook only trades in 'misery!'"

"Aunt Clairlowe, I have uttered my deep confession; I now live," whispered the heart-breaking accents, "only to love those who love me; and at God's will to die. Spare me the wretched certainty of his guilt, and I will bless you."

Mrs. Clairlowe had used many arguments in succession, to lead her sorrowing niece to doubt the honour of Sir Brook; but never before offered so unequivocal a censure, and, despite her excellent judgment in every other

instance, she had erred on this occasion, and the heart of Gertrude Grey was breaking.

What is the human heart? Is it not the light reflected from the tabernacle of our sensibilities? as the sun is to the day, so the heart is to the soul,—the sad unerring registrar of this life's joys and griefs,—the fatal messenger to the judgment seat.—Oh, guard and keep my soul free from the knowledge of his defection! My fancy will not admit the dark idea. Surely, then, 'twill never reach my heart.

Such were the wildering thoughts, companions to Miss Grey, when the kind old lady had adjusted her pillows, and left her side, to obey the summons of the first breakfast bell.

Miss Clairlowe had risen earlier than usual, to make personal inquiries for her cousin, and consequently made her appearance in the breakfast-room before the customary hour.

Harold Dentnoris had preceded her, carrying with him a portfolio (presented by Mary

to the good Rector), containing several well-executed sketches of the surrounding country.

The usual good-morrows were exchanged, chairs put in the path of her Harold would have bartered wealth and power to clear of every obstruction. Yet, as she pursued her hurried journey to the Conservatory, where flowers seemed resolved to bud and bloom in gentle defiance of the bleak, drear, wintry sky above, incredible impediments occurred; the light footfall was irregularly made, and more formidable felt the short distance to be traversed across that moderately-sized room.

"I am so sorry to interrupt your studies, Mr. Dentnoris," said Mary, smiling provokingly at his blunders, "but you may continue them immediately,—I merely wanted to gather this for Miss Grey," holding towards him a leaf of the dark verbena.

"Nay, Miss Clairlowe, although I could not devote my attention to any other thing in mute existence more pleasing than these

sketches, yet I am not so oblivious a student as to forget the opportunity of having them explained by their own artist."

"My poor sketches, are you engaged with?" asked the beautiful girl.

"Yes, and if you will condemn yourself to remain one moment with so dull a companion, may I ask you to explain the whereabout of this pretty temple?" Harold saw the happy blush, the timid acquiescence; and although his conscience notified alarm, its dictates were unheeded.

Mary endeavoured to reconcile herself to a position, not wholly terrible, notwithstanding a thousand fears. There were at least an equal number of exquisite revealings, blended with the recollection of her companion's presence; and although a stranger might have considered the interview rather heavy than otherwise, the two, now together, were perfectly agreed upon the chances of enlightenment to be derived from Mary's

lingering those few brief moments over the unconscious portfolio.

After a description of several drawings, it was decided that Harold should visit the pictured scenes, and recognise the remaining spots, in order to prove the truthfulness of her pencil; then, with bounding steps, and a heart filled with phantom happiness, the blushing girl withdrew.

Well did Mary Clairlowe feel he loved her: the tone of his voice,—his quick half-finished sentences, so unlike the tranquil manner of his general address,—the silent smile, when her blue eyes were lifted up to his,—the struggle to reply with coldness, even as champion ever did to the affianced lady of his friend's devotion,—all told her she was deeply, dearly loved.

And can the worldlier host condemn the wild hope re-animating the blighted prospects of the desponding Harold, while bending to catch the trembling "Yes," or quickly breathed

negative, during their first free communion,—the silly question, and less wise reply,—the contradictions,—and last, but dearest of that half-hour's life, the thrilling madness of the finger's touch, when passing the fragile paper from one hand to another?

Yet what was there in that meeting? To Mary, what was it? To the impassioned Harold, what had it betrayed? A dream! a troubled, happy, dancing dream, that could stay not; he thought upon it, and his brain reeled! strove to forget it; called it "misery;" alas! it swam in tormenting joyousness. Mary stood before him to realize the vision: life was extant, hope called it onward,—what will not hope attempt? — what not perfect in our imaginations? mocking us in the effort to attain. How many separated chains unite, and summon from the depth of its despair, the warm heart blighted,—the mind, till hope recall it, nervelessly undone?

Harold Dentnoris acknowledged himself ille-

gitimate only for want of proof to substantiate his rights. This world's laws had erroneously established the sad verdict. The son suspected not the honour of his parents; the fallen heir loved, revered, believed in them; in their graves, and amidst the clamour of distracting legalities, hope lent him aid, brightening, like the light from a far-off star, the fulfilment of his questionable destiny.

To Miss Clairlowe the knowledge of the irremediable impediment to any dearer view, than the simple indulgence of her love for him, rather augmented her devotedness, affording an additional incentive to respect the affection which her soul cherished. Whenever an indistinct idea of seeing its idol continually, and of sharing his cares, obtruded itself, her heart recoiled. The old-fashioned prejudices of "family" dispelled the wish of becoming, one day or other, the wife of Harold Dentnoris. "No," reasoned the fascinating devotee, "he can only be to me as a bird worshipped in dis-

tant lands; I will keep my blithe secrets in my heart, and live on, loving, though apart.

"Oh, Mary, I feared my promised leaf had been forgotten!" exclaimed Gertrude Grey, as the door admitted her happy-looking cousin.

"No! oh, no! Here it is, as fresh and beautiful as I would have you to be, Gertry," she replied, kissing the invalid's forehead. "*Mais, au revoir*. When breakfast is over, I will return."

CHAPTER X.

No! the sick soul that wounded flies
From all its earthly thoughts held dear,
Will more some gleam of memory prize,
That draws the long-lost treasure near;
And warmly presses to its breast
The very thought that mars its rest.

Who with the weight of years would wish to bend,
When youth itself survives young love and joy?
CHILDE HAROLD.

* * * The bastard's lot!
Strong as Necessity he starts away,
Climbs against wrong, and brightens into day.

LADY WILVERTON and her nephew were pacing to and fro in the wide old hall, waiting the appearance of George and his sister, who were to accompany them for a ride on that clear frosty morning.

"How much paler Miss Grey has become since her departure from Venice! I was distressed to see so melancholy a change."

"Poor girl!" sighed Aunt Marianne; "I fear hers is a sad story, and the pallor is but the result of her unhappy attachment."

"Are you aware of the circumstances connected with it?" asked Harold.

"Not entirely. Mrs. Clairlowe explained something of the affair to me, finding that her good old husband had referred to it the other morning. I am afraid Sir Brook has played a wretched game in that quarter. Miss Clairlowe never hears him mentioned without a frown, and, indeed, occasionally an expression indicative of contempt. One of these days I will tell you, Harold, why I resigned the dear old Abbey, and its beloved lanes, and all that I so loved around it."

"Did he make Miss Grey an offer?"

"Once it was imagined so; yet he was then indisputably Miss Deschamps' favoured suitor.

He certainly made her proposals which Colonel Clairlowe considered equivalent, but no promise of marriage has been acknowledged by Miss Grey; her cousin affirms that such a thing did pass between them, and in their happier days it was a constant theme with the two companions. Now, however, Gertrude is silent on the subject. It happened that on an evening of more than ordinary hilarity, Sir Brook's attentions to Miss Deschamps were sufficiently singular for Colonel Clairlowe to point out their impropriety."

"And Sir Brook's reply?" said young Dentnoris, hastily.

"That he never entertained more serious intentions towards one cousin than the other. At one time, he said, he fancied Miss Grey requited his preference; but since she had given him cause to feel her total indifference, he had not pressed the point, and only lived on in hope of her returning a latent feeling which no after years of unkindness or neglect should eradicate.

"The Colonel, of course, pursued the matter no farther, and the blame, if any blame there were, was attributed to the niece. Sir Brook's visits were less frequent, till at length he quitted Venice altogether.

"Some few days after his departure, Miss Deschamps' injudicious love of 'plain truth,' as she termed it, induced her to send poor Gertrude the whole of Mr. Emmersly's letters to herself, in one of which he ridiculed the notion of Colonel Clairlowe's anxiety to relieve his purse of so expensive an appendage as a beautiful niece; concluding the sarcasm by a wish that his clever and most dear Ida should perfectly understand that, ever as it had been her custom not to withhold her sportive fancies when writing to him, so candid also would he be in chronicling for her every creation of his enslaved thoughts.

"The inconsiderately selfish woman followed up her letter by a visit to Miss Grey, during which a passionate discussion took place. They

were alone, and, excited by Ida's comments, Gertrude broke a small blood-vessel. Alarmed at the sight of blood, Miss Deschamps called for assistance. Gertrude was only sufficiently alive to desire Mary to read the letter.

"Poor girl, she had no other way to rid herself of a visitor, whose only endeavour had been to sever the very life-strings of her heart. Mrs. Clairlowe had vainly sought to win Gertrude from her memories; it was, indeed, as lately proved, a fruitless undertaking. When Miss Grey recovered, the favoured victim of Sir Brook was far removed from their neighbourhood.

"Have you known more than this?" inquired Lady Wilverton, startled to perceive the contemptuous curl of her nephew's lip.

"Not half so much, thank Heaven!" replied Harold. "You have, indeed, surprised me. Are you perfectly assured that Miss Grey gave no cause for him to believe her indifferent and cold? Perchance the atrocious rumours of his

perfidy were exaggerated by that relentless Ida Deschamps."

"They unfortunately bear no question. Mrs. Clairlowe seemed desirous that I should know nothing more than the outline of Gertrude's sufferings; but, as the kind old lady proceeded, she found it difficult to observe the medium course—her feelings bore too earnest an interest in her niece to permit any disguise of her real sentiments. I perceived her motive for a partial concealment; she wished to avoid as much as possible the wounds inflicted on my poor self, little supposing that I had also borne with his ingratitude. It appears that he communicated many reasons to show the Clairlowes that you were the accepted lover of Miss Deschamps. I need not tell you that all refused to believe the assertion."

"I thank you, dearest Aunt Marianne; you will have a novel source of astonishment, when I describe the pitying farewell I took of Sir Brook Emmersly. We met at Clarens, on

my return to England, where, far from supporting the character of a gay Lothario, he called at the auberge, just as the caléche was starting, entreating me to grant him a private interview, if but the hundredth part of a minute.

"Sir Brook then informed me of his father's death; interrupting my congratulations on his accession to the baronetcy, by the question, 'Shall you resume your acquaintance with the Clairlowes in England?' I replied, that I fancied you were old friends, but for twelve years Colonel Clairlowe had resigned Marchmont to an invalid brother; that brother, however, had quitted England altogether, consequently I thought it very probable you would see the family frequently, although no correspondence had assisted to maintain the friendliness of former years.

"'You have been very explicit, Dentnoris, and I thank you,' was Sir Brook's remark; 'beware of Gertrude Grey! I have been very

shamefully treated by her, and my heart is breaking. I have no joy in England now. Is it true that you marry a widow, and speedily?' 'I am not one in the secret, Emmersly, at all events.' 'Ah, well, then, I suppose the report is not true. I suppose not!' 'But, my dear fellow, we came here on your business, not on mine.' 'On mine! Came you here on my business? alas! I have none in life!'

"The pain of a reply was spared me. He waved his hand, mounted his horse, and thus we parted. Heavens, if I had rightly understood the doubles of his villanous game ——"

"Stay," exclaimed Lady Wilverton, "it is not your affair; I only conceive, from perhaps unsubstantial fears, that Miss Grey feels most deeply—that her heart is breaking, rather than there is one atom of feeling in that perfidious man. And, Harold," continued Aunt Marianne, "think well, before you venture to repose one thought on marriage. You are still very young; do not give one single chance to Cupid

till we hail the thirtieth anniversary of your birth."

"Quite a new creed for so youthful a bride as Lady Wilverton," rejoined Dentnoris; "but I have puzzled myself wonderfully to find reasons to account for your indifference to my engagements."

"Very well, since you offer the key, I will reconnoitre the castle; for, that you have built one in your mind, I am pretty certainly assured. May I put one question?"

"A thousand, dearest aunt; and I as honestly will confess myself to my 'confessor elect,' provided that staid old dame, Philosophy, be banished from our conversation."

"Tell me, then, are you not loving Mary Clairlowe? and can you not perceive how dangerous is the path you tread? Wait, dear Harold, until your right to seek and win her is established."

"That period is as far removed as heaven from earth; yet hear me, Aunt Marianne," said

Dentnoris, solemnly. "Though my life be doomed to wear away unblessed, or had I the torturing apprehension that to-morrow's sun would shine upon Miss Clairlowe as the bride of another, I would still drag on my way, darkened, perchance, by the power of an unswerving faith—in an utter, firm, a never-ending love. The inheritance hath passed from me. The blot is on my escutcheon. My only buckler, then, remains in the affections of my home. I can live, die, and be buried, and the bleak record of illegitimacy be forgotten. Oh, my father!"

"Ungrateful Harold!" replied the soft voice of his aunt.

"Say not so; gratitude is the only feeling I may now possess unlinked to formal law and themes conventional. Say not I am ungrateful. Do I look elsewhere for joy? have I not unlocked the vital feelings of my existence? have I not hushed the tempest of my passion, and conquered even the hope to be beloved?"

"Oh, Harold, would that my poor words could tell you all I long to say."

"Say on, say on! I will be patient, for I know your goodness, my friendly monitress."

"Then, Harold, you struggle with false reasonings; you have not yet subdued the hope you allude to; you must not rate your theories too highly—you must not. It was an unguarded expression, that implied distrust of you; we would not readily detract, even in thought, from the love we bear you.

"Adieu!" faltered Lady Wilverton, as she quitted the saloon, half repentant for having touched chords which she trembled to believe were bound up in the life of her nephew; and her anxiety was increased by the dread lest his too obvious love for Miss Clairlowe should receive a check from her proud though kind old father, added to the conviction that no alliance with a blighted name would be accepted by him or Mrs. Clairlowe.

Mary Clairlowe had just seated herself by

her cousin, fraught with the secrets of that morning's post, when Sarah's light step was heard; the door gently opened, and the children were by the couch of their favourite, Miss Grey, offering their morning salutations.

"Dear children!" slowly observed the invalid, as the door closed upon their departure. "They are very happy, nevertheless I cannot envy them, for though there be sorrow and agony, still the pleasurable first cause of my sad grief remaineth in memory till this life's end."

"I have seldom passed a week so replete with adventure as this last has been, Gertry," said her cousin, unheeding the foregoing remark; "and to conclude systematically with my episodes, I will tell you that Mr. Dentnoris leaves us to-morrow, on a riding excursion to Norton Valence."

"Really! what is his mission?—it must be something important! Norton Valence is in ——shire! Does he travel alone?"

"No, not alone, Mr. Harold accompanies him, and they are to be absent for five days."

"And my cousin Mary looks happy at such a prospect!"

"Ah, now you appear interested, idle Gertry! I will tell you that a letter arrived by post this day, enclosing a note from the Bishop of ——, and begging Mr. Dentnoris to take a peep at the church property in the aforesaid village, imagining it will suit the taste of his friend, Beverley Dentnoris, far better than his present location in this noisy town. The dear kind Rector wished to postpone the journey, but papa and mamma immediately commenced a chorus of negatives, whereupon the fine eyes of Uncle Beverley opened as wide as the moon at her full, and looked gladsomely forward to the morrow's proposed departure.

"One auspicious event will be gained by the journey—feeling quite certain, from the

Bishop's description, that the change will be approved,—which is, that our next visit to these dear people will be made to their country dwelling;—I have an insurmountable antipathy to market cities."

"The first part of your history is delightful, inasmuch as it pleases the Rector,—what next am I to hear?" asked Gertrude.

"Thus much,—Lady Wilverton has received charming accounts from Loder Castle, accompanied by an invitation to meet us for the Easter week, all of which she begged me to read for your especial advantage, if you can keep the secret of the enclosures; my parole was accepted for my cousin's integrity, and I bore away the prize in triumph."

"Pray read them," said the musing Gertrude; "will Charlotte's marriage take place during our stay at the Grange?"

"Not one word was spoken the other day about it, so I imagine it may be again deferred. I shall be glad to be at the Grange for a week;

yet willingly would dispense with Charlotte's society."

"Why, Mary?"

"I cannot say why,—I have the same aversion to the idea of Mr. Percy's presence at Loder Castle."

"You have never seen him, have you?"

"No! but I fancy my odd anticipations arise from the knowledge that he is bent on paying such unprecedented honours to his mother's friends."

"Ah, Mary! shall I explain your apprehensions?"

"No, Gertry," retorted Mary, in a vexed tone. "No! you are not serious, and I am."

"I am perfectly serious; at least, in being certain that Mr. Percy intends to rival ——"

"Nay, Gertry, I have no lover; he will be alone in the field," said Mary, recovering her good humour, which rarely vanished even for an instant from her sweet face.

"You cannot feign, my dear cousin; have

you not seen Mr. Harold prefer a look from you to all our many enchantments in beloved Venice?"

"Well, well, he has much to sadden him; one should not muse upon any whim of his."

"But your cheek, Mary, belies your colder accents. Do not be cold to him, Mary, he is so gentle and so good,—so silent, and so sorrowful sometimes,—I would but rejoice in my prophecy that at some not distant period you will feel more sensible of the kind sighs he often suppresses; he speaks so murmuringly of you whenever I sit near him—oh, he has almost whispered love thoughts to you, Mary!"

"Never, Gertrude!" exclaimed the proud girl. "I shall never love; and, as for Mr. Harold Dentnoris, we neither of us acknowledge the little god's authority."

The trembling, scarce articulated sentence ended, Gertrude Grey sighed; she could not comprehend emotion inconsistent with the ex-

pressions of this last avowal; her thoughts were deep and still, yet never once concealed, did circumstances not seem to oppose their revealment; and why could Mary wish to hide a single expectation from one, who, though not sister in name, was even more than sister in attachment?

Breathing one other long, low sigh, she observed:—

"Poor Harold and I, for the sake of our parents' sorrows, ought to avoid cheerful society."

"Gertrude! nay, do not speak thus: let me continue this morning's intelligence—if you promise to reward my story by merrier responses than 'Ah me's!' and clasped hands. My brother loves you, Gertry, and since you offer me a lover, permit me to return the compliment, and tell you how poor Lodwick yearns to see you—after all his care last night. He is eligible!"

"Mary, your dear brother I love affectionately—as you can love him, so do I."

"He would have a warmer thought—poor Lody!"

"I do not understand you, dearest: the love of years—can it be cast aside in a few fleeting days? No, Mary, the love of the passionate heart is dead! dead! I could bear 'his' presence now, and sit undisturbed by joy or sadness. Think of Brook Emmersly, as when we knew him with Harold at ——"

"Ah, Gertry, he has run a maddening course since then!"

"Do not denounce him, I beseech you; he has offended past redemption,—I love him no more,—for do I not admit his unworthiness? Yet, Mary, 'a time' did come to pass by more rapidly than one's memories decay. I must still treasure that sunny retrospect, and only pray you not to frown when you recall the brilliant, fascinating Brook, nor connect his assumed devotion with the treachery of the Baronet. In my heart they are distinctly two. I loved the one—I desp—— No, I cannot utter it."

Miss Clairlowe listened, anxious to catch one word which might lead to a new topic, for the self-loosening of the strained mind, when the many sounds of woe would gradually stay their harsh vibrations, and the repetition of her wrecked happiness be drowned in the low moaning of fatigue. Thus it happened, and Gertrude again calmly reverted to the letters Mary had brought for her amusement.

Rejoiced at her cousin's tranquillity, Miss Clairlowe proceeded to communicate the contents of manuscripts painfully embarrassing to herself.

"Then here beginneth number one," said she, giving one kind look to the languid sufferer:—

"My dear Lady Wilverton,

"They tell me I may venture to ask a favour from you, and as the encouragement to do so emanates with our mutual friends at Marchmont, I am emboldened to write to you

on the subject. This, then, is our request, that you and Mr. Dentnoris give us the pleasure of your company during the visit. Lord Delvor's bewitching little friends will, we trust, accompany you. I have lately been introduced to your nephew, Mr. Harold Dentnoris, nor can any feeble expression of mine describe half the admiration his manner and appearance elicited. I hope you can pardon me if I make an allusion to his family matters; I feel that any other motive but the desire to serve him, could not sanction my interference: so, dear Lady Wilverton, hear me to the end.

"Both Lord Loder and myself are acquainted with the question concerning the Dentnoris inheritance; and I assure you it appears to us a very impossible event that the high spirited Mrs. Wilson should have rendered herself liable to the terrible scandal from her premature marriage with Lord Dentnoris, and wholly unlike her to have forgotten any observance which could in the most remote degree

tend to compromise the respectability of the title she accepted. Can you excuse me, then, for enclosing you a few notes I found among the manuscripts of my sister? I had a slight recollection of a schoolfellow of hers, who, with herself, was much attracted by a young lord, George Dentnoris; the name struck me as being the same, and as my poor sister's sudden death left me in possession of chests full of correspondence, I yesterday sought for any reference that might probably be gleaned from some very old girlish-looking writing. I enclose all yet discovered, and if in any way the information relating to Sarah Barrington's school-days and marriage with Major Wilson can disencumber your mind of one small doubt concerning the destiny of your much admired nephew, the impertinence of a blunt old English woman will have answered a worthy purpose, and entitled her to hope you will receive us into the circle of your affectionate friends. "BELLA LODER."

"The enclosures now follow," said Miss Clairlowe, smiling, "from Sarah Barrington to sister Anne:"—

"MY DEAR ANNE,

"One of the masters betrayed me yesterday; I pretended to a sprained ankle, and was excused the dancing lesson, and allowed to sit in the green-house, when, as it always happens, Wentworth Wilson looked over the wall, on horseback; down fell my work, and I ran to speak to him. Mr. Collart was at that precise moment stepping into his gig. I felt plagued;—my old beau took his leave, while I returned to the studio. About an hour after this, Madame Tremaine gave me a lecture on 'Truth,' and delivered me over to the purgatory of that never-to-be-improved penalty at this horrid place (Coventry). Alas, my delectable conversation is lost to the girls for a week! Good bye. The Major forgot to speak one word of George D.

"SARAH BARRINGTON."

"DEAR ANNE,

"Fancy what all this nonsensical 'fun' has ended in. You know I have but two thousand pounds on this side of the world; and mamma declares, in spite of my protestations to the contrary, that I am ignorant, and pretty considerably fine,—two things wholly incompatible with agreeableness; therefore, deeming it likely I shall make no more eligible conquest, she desires me to marry Major Wilson, who proposed yesterday. No, I was not expelled, but simply cantered home, and, once there, persuaded papa to let me remain; he was so pleased with my horsemanship, he forgave my truantcy. Ah, yes! would that he could avert this marriage, and as readily forgive my predilection elsewhere. Have you heard nothing? Does G. D. not return this year? I shall not be one of those alive to welcome him.

"S. B."

"DEAR ANNE,

"I was happy as I looked on your bridal

veil, for very little of anything else could I see. If any one should ask questions about the bride's dress, I will answer thus—a brilliant blonde veil, a wreath of orange blossoms buried in their dark green leaves, myriads of sparkling somethings—fire-flies for aught I know—and a slight shadowy tall pale figure beneath or in the midst.

"Yes, you are a wife, a happy wife, Anne. Come and see my fetters riveted—fetters *would you* call them? Friday is fixed for the execution and interment of my best thoughts—their ghosts will be unchainable; and were I a pagan, Major Wilson's wealth would suffer somewhat of spoliation, to lay the goblins, or satisfy their desire to scare away the minor senses, which are all that is left of your

"S. B.

"P. S.—Why fix on so early a day for the marriage? I met G. D.'s mother; she scowled upon me. In defiance, I asked how Lord Dent-

noris was, and when he would return. The woman! she looked unutterable things, certainly not fond ones—told me he was wedded to the Continent, where she soon should join him. That is the tale, thought I. I am wedded, too! Came home and fixed the day! My little sister will be my bridemaid. I must have the ceremony complete in every observance. She, too, is not yet old enough to perjure herself, by swearing she witnessed the union of two souls in holy wedlock.

"Your disappointed ambitionist,

"S. B."

"DEAR ANNE,

"I have been a wife for three months, and am about to become a widow; I wish you could be near me now. Major Wilson has been goodness itself to me; my waywardness his gentle fondness has almost cured; but he is very ill —his old complaint—and I, the wild and wilful Sarah Barrington, have scarcely slept for three

nights, not because I wished to be awake, but in real anxiety for my indulgent husband; he is a fit member for a better world.

"Write to me for mercy's sake; he wakes.

"Your affectionate

"S. B."

"Well, Gertrude, what do you think of these documents?"

"Think, Mary—that your friends are truly born!"

"Truly born! yes, but legitimately christened as well?"

A long conversation ensued. The mirthful spirits of Mary Clairlowe roused the drooping orphan; and again all was harmony in the home of Beverley Dentnoris.

CHAPTER XI.

"Can parting be 'sweet sorrow'
When she bears on her sable wings
The dream of a dark to-morrow,
Where hope no radiance flings!
With her pilgrim weeds invested,
And the scrip and staff in hand;
With her mandate high attested,
To break the social band!"

"Admire, exult, despise, laugh, weep,—for here
There is such matter for all feeling."
CHILDE HAROLD.

THE sun rose pale and watery on that bleak December morning, the snow fast melting from the trees, and all nature bore a humid and comfortless aspect of desolation.

Harold was not of a morbid temperament, yet the mournfulness of exterior objects imper-

ceptibly blent itself with his first thoughts of the morning, for will not even the strongest mind look timidly up to the foreboding skies.

The handsome church on this occasion gleamed like a listless maiden in the sultry heat of a summer's twilight; and, though all else looked sad and drear, the light of day smiled merrily 'mid earth's pervading mistiness.

The travellers rode on in silence, busy in the communion of their own hearts, till the good Rector felt disposed to rally Harold on his moody humour.

"You seem already to regret leaving our merry party behind; however, in five days more we shall, please God, be at home again; and your expatriation, Harold, will but enhance pleasures, for awhile relinquished."

"Five days, sir!"

The nephew ceased; he had been ruminating on the happy yesterday; and knew that long ere their return the Clairlowes would be

far away—not very distant, but beyond his reach. He had declined the invitation to the Grange; he had refused an introduction to Loder Castle.

Percy Loder was known to him; they were at Oxford together. Mary Clairlowe, every one felt, was the wife selected by Lady Loder for her only son and sole heir. Harold thought on this—he, the ineligible, dared not follow in her footsteps.

He wished most heartily, but how vainly, that some word might escape Lady Wilverton, to convince the dear girl, the arbitress of his love, that he had not quitted the spot over which her presence shone, a willing exile—and then undid the wish, and prayed for strength to endure the untold conflict of his mind.

Fortunately Miss Clairlowe was unacquainted with the fact of his having excused himself from the wedding party, for such it was at length declared to be. She hoped to meet him

there, and the anticipation enabled her to bid him 'good-bye' without that comfortless uncertainty which, even in parting for one short hour with those we love, creeps over us; and none awarded her half the credit she gave herself for playing a Roman's part.

"I have been waiting very patiently, Harold, to hear the conclusion of your sentence; is it ready?" asked the Rector.

"I beg ten thousand pardons! I was abashed at my luckless beginning. I will frame something suited to misfortune's selected victim, and delight you in another moment."

"Harold, I wish I could hear you speak more resignedly, and bow with greater fortitude to the will of God!"

"Think, dear sir, I cannot marry! I am debarred the best possessions of man—a wife and children!"

"How so, my dear boy? and even were it so—which, remember, I cannot admit—why do we all strive with Him—why imagine our-

selves entitled to the choicest blessings of created nature? Have we served our God with such disinterested heart-yearning zeal, that we are honestly able to look for higher comforts than those allotted us? dare we repine at finding ourselves minus any especial instance of His providence, which our blind necessity for loving may desire? Can we look upon our works and say, He hath curtailed my reward—he hath unfairly limited the recompence to His creature! I deserve more. For what? I have a Master who made me, and all surrounding me—what is the duty of a labourer in that Master's vineyard? to resent the wages he is allowed, because forsooth the carrying them home and counting may be a toil to him?

"Many of the labourers travail more than myself; their recompence is apparently less; then why do they struggle on through hardship and suffering? why are so many trials set before them? why are they forced to halt in

their path? it is for this, my dear Harold:— Some hearts are stubborn, and their failings, like the diamond's excrescence, must be worn away by trouble, by perpetual care, continual subjugation.

"Many a hardened sinner, Harold, has been in the bonds of 'Herbert,' tossed to the bosom of the Lord, by the uses of adversity, when wealth and fame had failed to raise one recollection of 'a living soul' within him.

"It behoves us then, my boy, in place of repining and discontent, to inquire of ourselves in due humility, wherefore hath my God afflicted me? and reverse the catechism of the unbeliever. Let us ask why does the Lord love me? why divert my thoughts, my devotion from this non-eternal world, and point my hopes heavenward—that once fastened to the thread of life, every wish during this earthly pilgrimage shall, without difficulty or obstruction, pursue the labyrinth he hath made plain; preparing its purifying channel as the passage

through which the everlasting soul shall pass, to meet his angels—to see himself!"

"Dear sir, dear uncle, I yield; and the brightening sun bursts upon my contrite thoughts with prophetic intelligence."

Two days elapsed, when Mr. Dentnoris and his companion entered the neat village of Norton Valence.

A gentlemanly-looking man occupied the side-table of 'the Travellers' Inn,' while around him on the floor lay various rolls of parchment. To this individual the Rector applied for information connected with the town and neighbourhood, &c.

"I know very little of either," replied the stranger, politely, "further than concerns the church property; these documents, strewed about in such disorder, relate to that, as also to the transfer of my brother-in-law's personal effects, which I am rather hurried to arrange, the Bishop being in extraordinary haste to instal the new Rector. My sister will leave imme-

diately after the deceased's remains are consigned to the narrow cell prepared for him among the tombs of many who, won by his counsels, have preceded him to a better world, relying on the faith he had taught them. Having injured no man wilfully, he needed no forgiveness from any of old Adam's sons, and we trust his frailties were few, even in the sight of God; he had one harassing disappointment, poor man, so entirely unconnected with his family interests, that the delirium it caused surprised us—about a Mr. Norris, or De Norris, I forget which; but here is the paper open—I must put it up; however," said the stranger, looking over the table, "I may as well show it to every one I meet. Perchance it may save my sister some money; as her husband's last request commanded the contents of the note alluded to, (which by all that's honest I do not see), to be advertised until the documents should be reclaimed. May I ask you, sir, to remove that newspaper one moment. How

very singular," continued the barrister (for such the gentleman proved to be); "I must have dropped it; but I forebore to examine the papers at the Rectory, on account of my poor sister; still it may have slipped out there.

"Here, John," said he, turning to a liveried attendant, "bring my horse after me. If, in the meantime, kind sirs, you should perceive a small half sheet of note-paper, written on both sides and crossed, you will greatly oblige me by preserving it. Good afternoon."

A quickly despatched luncheon refreshed our travellers, who found themselves at four o'clock contemplating one of the most exquisite landscapes English scenery affords, which, notwithstanding earth's wintry dress, still arrested the attention of visitors. Here and there a few spots of snow glistened in frosted whiteness, while in the distant back ground, imperfectly obscured by the broad avenue leading to the Duke of ——'s feudal hall, a clear stream rippled on, regardless of the cold reign

of Christmas. An almost forest of trees threw their wide branches high into the air, proudly mingling their knotted tendrils far above the humble thorns and briers, with the denuded boughs of which many a gap was filled—the sombre holly seeming the solitary dressed tenant of the wild woodland.

A solemn yet exuberant loveliness reigned over the chill gloom of the year's decay.

The mountain in its distant grandeur bounded the view to the westward.

The road on the park side led through many vistas and isolated dells.

At length the Rectory suddenly opened: Mr. Dentnoris was enraptured with every feature of the rich country, and no less gratified by finding the site and appearance of his future residence in keeping with the picture.

The garden, extensive and neatly cultivated, with a sloping bank leading through the eastern skirts of the town to a winding of the crystal stream, the view thence being still more beau-

tiful, and according wonderfully with the tastes of the spectators.

Magnificent copses hung over the curling waters, occasionally touching its deep blue shades, and kissing with graceful dignity the white foam its current scarcely formed, ere it passed into coldness again.

The setting sun with its silvery rays glanced through the frequent interstices of a toy-like ravine, leaving the unbrightened spots in still deeper gloom.

The spire of a church, just discernible in the low valley, hastened the steps of the two Dentnorises.

"All as yet, Harold, seems most propitious," observed his uncle; "I wish Marianne had made one of our inspecting committee—she would really enjoy these wild glories!"

"Yes," answered his less sanguine nephew—albeit a secret thought whispered—"Would that she had occupied my place; I willingly would have resigned in her favour, and ex-

changed these 'wild glories' for the happy scene in which that sweet laughing girl is merry, even now. Regrets like these must be all I offer her;" still mused the wanderer. "Alas!"

It had been at Lady Wilverton's suggestion that Harold accompanied her brother, her hope being to lead him from hourly communion with Mary Clairlowe. Both were dear to her, and her reason shrank from the probability of witnessing their young days clouded with love's sore embittering grief.

Colonel Clairlowe had already evinced impatience during their riding parties, and frequently interrupted their playful discussions at home.

His daughter remarked all this, and tried to strengthen his confidence, by expressing her proper sense of hereditary preferment; little suspecting that the tremulous accent of her voice and manner manifested the very feeling he on no account would encourage, under the existing circumstances.

The old man heard her sweet tones, gazed into her fond blue eyes, and read the contradiction to the arguments so unceasingly adduced.

"Come, Harold," cried the Rector, "awaken from your reveries—see how splendidly arranged this valley is. My dear boy, what occasions your determined taciturnity? I thought you participated in my passion for 'the beautiful.'"

"I am puzzled to comprehend my own impressions, my dear sir; certainly I have visited this neighbourhood in earlier days, or in my dreams have had it revealed to me."

"Is it not more possible that you have met a similar view in your travels, Harold?"

"No. I feel persuaded that at some time or other I have stood upon this ground before."

"Nonsense, Harold, unless you have paid it a visit lately. Yet your letters never mentioned ——shire as one of the counties you explored. Really, my dear boy, you have been musing to some purpose. You had num-

bered four years when first you came to Landsworth, and, as far as my knowledge of your travels leads me, I think you were never far from North Devon."

"Nothing will satisfy me that I have not walked here at some moment of my existence."

"I think it probable you have traversed similar wild paths in Switzerland, where one meets occasionally the same complexly crowded landscapes; yet they possess a greater vastness, and are void too of this climate's wintry aspect. The valley, it is true, brings before the mind's eye an involution of splendid atoms; the space it occupies cannot exceed two hundred acres, yet there are hill and water, wood and pasture land, jumbled together—and those gloomy masses of naked trees beneath the rugged slope are beyond anything grandly solemn. The stories of ghosts and goblins are fast gaining an influence over me. I have been endeavouring to imagine one of Jack the Giant-killer's adversaries taking a handfull

from the original chaos, and throwing it down with the sudden and immense power the giant should possess. See how singularly the water and jagged rocks cling tenaciously to the very nooks, wherein that ought not, apparently, to have reposed. So singularly beautiful this scene is ——"

"Your imagination, my dear sir, seems running a race with my wits. I cannot recal one hour of my life with which Norton Valence is associated; and you, uncle, if you wander much farther in your vague fancies, will never return to the haven of common realities."

"And certain of that fact, my crude philosopher," rejoined Mr. Dentnoris, jocosely, "I will, while I can, summon more rational perceptions to their sway again."

There are few things more entrancing to a mind at peace than the quietude of a wooded churchyard, where flowers bloom in lonesome luxuriance among the sepulchres of the dead.

The close mown grass over grave-mounds of the peasantry, balustraded enclosures, marble slabs, and sculptured urns, proclaiming the last tributary devotion of man to man — Pride's dreary beacon, and the long farewell monument to earthly greatness.

On entering the churchyard of Norton Valence, the trodden pathway through almost obliterated burial heaps of the "long-ago" dead, with here and there a straggling tuft of winter moss, were the only things typical of life remaining, till, turning round the corner of an extraordinarily high cenotaph, a grave-digger was observed, pursuing his cheerless toil, while, some few paces apart, a greyheaded veteran reclined upon a rustic seat. The arrival of the strangers disturbed his reverie, and the ancient form hobbled off to a lonelier spot.

"Good afternoon, friend," said the Rector, addressing the grave-digger.

"Aye, sar! the arternoon be gude enow,

sure, but for the matter o' that, we maybe'd raythcr abun the gude weather, a ' we could kape the gude folks amang us. I takes it you're somewhat strange like in this country?"

Mr. Dentnoris looked inquiringly at the surly labourer, as the old man advanced towards them, gazing intensely on the features of the disconcerted Harold—then hesitated, smiled, and uncovering with one hand his hoary pate, raised the other to brush away the scanty locks of snow-white hair lingering upon his wrinkled forehead.

"I ask your pardon, gemmen, 'tis long agone since I set eyes on your lorship; so when you come along Jim Sloe, I had no notion as 'twas ye—an' why! I thought, in my unknowledged mind, thought I, if ever I sees im agin, he will ha keppit time bi my auld age—not so auld neither; but," continued the venerable speaker, "I thought ye would ha aged a bit, and might perhaps beshrine the face of an

humble friend and servant to command, if your lorship had ganged never so far agin; and now, didn't we meet no more, I'd know your voice on entering Heaven, though you be looking as bairny as ye do now."

"Indeed," replied Harold, in return for the civil harangue, "you have mistaken me! I am a stranger here!"

"A stranger, do ye call yoursel? Well, sure, 'twas but a 'dopted country after all, yet it would ha softened my hard road to death, could you have keppit the 'membrance of your old sarvant."

Harold had been several times on the point of interrupting the energetic speaker; and seeing the big tear gathered in the eyes of the earnest old man, he replied, kindly, "I would gladly claim your acquaintance, my good friend, but I was never in this neighbourhood until yesterday."

"You was never in this neighbourhood until yesterday! Never," ejaculated the reverend

inquirer, "Never at Norton Valence! Why, who lived in that cottage for a month?" said he, pointing to a pretty little retreat on the hill beyond; "and when ye left, didn't your own flesh and blude, your own bairn, come to we—didn't ye come up to us arter your solemn vows at church, and gie us all a hearty shake o' the hand, and say, 'thanks, my trusty friends,' like a true breasted lord o' the land as ye be; and, in the fourteenth month arter that, didn't ye come there to that there very cot for a month? Who was with ye then—when she, the beautifullest lady as ever drew a breath in Britain, was in her trouble?"

"Indeed—what can you mean?—the name! I beseech you, speak it," said the agitated Harold.

"And where now is she, then?—in the cold tomb, or ye could not a let the sun rise without the 'membrance of that cottage coming with it. Ah! I hears the world's a queer world in Indy. It makes un forbide one's kith an kin."

"Oh speak, I pray you, more explicitly," reiterated Harold.

"Aye! ye thinks I should be making o' thanks first, for ye be ower gude. I gets my ten a week from the big lawyer, and hadn't I, I'd be obligated for the poor house; but I gied my five hundred to the bank, and now it keeps us all genteel and comely like."

"What was your friend's name, my good old man?" asked the Rector, wondering at the tone of unaffected melancholy with which the peasant alluded to a mysterious "past."

"Ask un," rejoined the man, pointing to Harold; "there be rasons for kaping a secret sometimes—but, ah me! your eyes be none the sicklier—there's no mistaking ye."

"Indeed I shall be rejoiced," said the embarrassed young Dentnoris, "if you can give me any clue to your real friend;" afraid of entertaining hopes which glanced like meteors through his fancy.

"The name as is honoured by me, an' by

mine," said the old peasant, "is yourn;" and, still extending his finger towards Harold, he added, with a sigh, "Lord Dentnoris, if I shouldn't know ye, who should? Wasn't your boy as lief my own. Didn't your lorship call me Father? Often and often's the time ye have a said, 'Well, old Father, how goes the times to-day?' And wasn't your child at my Sally's bosom for many a month? and didn't we teach un to be above a lie! and didn't we get a print o' praises from his blessedest mother's mouth when she come to fetch un away. Ah, yes! the lips as has never been likened, parted wi' a bonniest smile as she spoke. 'Joseph and Sally,' says she, 'you have far exceeded your trust; my boy speaks and looks the gentleman. May God bless you!' She sobbed and cried upon my Sally's neck till we thought her heart would break. She said as a uncle had kindly undertaken charge of her boy, she should accompany your lorship to Indy. Ah, your lorship, did ye miss the

smile she smiled on turning out o' the wicket gate—and where is she now? the black about you tells me all."

Harold's breath came thickly, his throat filled with unuttered words.

"Lady Dentnoris has been dead many years," answered the Rector, endeavouring to assume a calm he felt not; "and Lord Dentnoris also."

"Dead, baith dead!" said the old man, plaintively. "Is this, then, my wee bairn?" Choked with an earnest sorrow, he turned silently to the tall form of the child he had nurtured.

"Then I sees ye, Lord Harold, agin—but they're gone—gone before me to Heaven. They were ower youthful to leave the earth so soon—but stop a bit, long years be passed since thin; sure I would na mind them quite," added the veteran despondingly; "but all they as have been long parted forbides the gap between.

"You know my name, then?" inquired the astonished heir.

"Your name, Maister Harold, or as now maun be, your lorship—know't! wan't I at your christenen, and didn't Sally take to ye like her own?"

"Yet," rejoined the Rector, "they say your friend Harold has no title to the inheritance?"

"They say! Who say?" exclaimed the peasant, angrily. "I'll say um! Didn't I go back and forward to find the certificates of marriage they thought as they had left in a empty desk at Mr. Arthur Dentnoris'? Howsomever we couldn't find um, and they sailed without um. I couldn't see Mr. Arthur, and never did."

"Not as you is sartain on," here interrupted the grave-digger; "for mysel, I has no matter o' doubt as we both sen un once."

"Did you never recover the certificates?" asked Mr. Dentnoris.

"Never. Never seed the colour o' the

paper agin," continued the old man, "but I promised to spake pretty particular to the parson here about um—them sort o' things is best cared about—and I takes it, I did, too, for I was occasional afeared of the old lady, who wanted Mr. George to marry the Duke's great darter, 'stead of the beautifullest widdy as ever saw the sun a setten, aknowen it would return agin to light up her blue bonny eyes."

"And where does the parson live to whom you allude?"

"He's dead! dead as a nit!" answered the man; "and his tombstone stands among the lordliest o' the land, and we keeps up the willow as is over it."

Struck by the extraordinary obstacles arising on all sides—and appearing in every way to fence off the clear road to his title—Harold meditated for a moment.

"This grave is for the last parson, too—Parson Danvers; he wished to lie in the lone-

liest spot," said the grave-digger. "I doesn't fancy why, I'm sure."

"But you're a keepin his lorship standing, Jim," muttered the veteran friend of Lord Dentnoris, jealous that another should have found the chance of enlightening the visitors on even one subject; then turning to the visitors, he exclaimed, "my cabin's but a stone throw, and it's bitter cold just now."

"We will follow you with pleasure," cried Harold, "and we can talk as we proceed."

"I shouldn't wonder," continued the old man, "that if they're a disputen about your rights, it comes of that same owdacious (gemman he called himself) chap who come staren and ranting about the place, may be last Michaelmas, I think it was three year.

"The first time as I see im was just as I was a sitten t'other side o' the yard, as may be now, and Jim Sloe was a digging, as he does at the present, when up comes a gemman wi'

a glowerin face, and humped back, so much so, as his cloak wouldn't hide his shame. Jim there thought it was Mr. Arthur, but I didn't; I couldn't fancy anything belonging to his lorship could be so ugly-like, howsomever. 'So, ho,' says he, 'who's you? What's your name, old chap?' speaking to Jim.

"'My name's Jim Sloe, sexton of the parish of Norton Valence,' says Jim.

"'Well, then, if you are Jim Sloe on other days, be Jim Quick now, and show me through the church.'

"Jim looked at im, astonish-like, making answer, 'It's not everybody as is let in at them church doors, when there's no minister present to tell him what they comes for.'"

A long sigh from Harold, resulting from this tedious oratory, was checked by Mr. Dentnoris, who walked silently on, gathering from each sentence a testification of his nephew's rights, and evidence against the wretch, Mr. Arthur, whose vile schemes he

recognised in every sentence uttered by the feeble communicant, who went on:—

"'Oh, that's it,' says the horser, jumping off his roan beast, 'that's it, is it. I'll tell you what else too,' says he, clenching his fist, and going alongside Jim. 'You dog, I'll sharpen your lazy tongue, and quicken your crazy limbs. I wish to go into that church instantly, or I'll know the reason why. Why, I say, are the doors locked when a public baptism is to take place, and the people are actually waiting in their cottages to go to it?'

"'Sure, I'll tell ye why,' answers Jim. 'This is why, then. One day gone by, somewhere last month, I had just got every book in its place, when a man got into the vestry, mysterious like, for no one sees him go or come—but the books had been interfered wi', and that was enough. Well, I speaks to the minister about it, when he says, 'Never agin, Jim, allow any one to go in without you.' Well, I thought I hadn't; however, I seed

plainly enough,' says Jim, 'that I might be sharper. I'll take a sight o' care next time. So don't stand glimmerin no longer at me, sir, for I've gave you your answer, an' wish ye good morning.'

"'I'll tell you a little secret first,' says the strange humped creature. 'I want to see that church. Will ye or will ye not admit me?'

"'Try it on,' says Jim. 'I'll no doubt keep your secret, and profit by it, too. So out o' the way, sar, or I'll stretch your length upon this here mound. I sees its no holy cause you're come about, and wouldn't gi' ye the honour o' laying in my yard if I didn't put ye upon the narry bed o' one who wasn't much yer better. I've got solemn wisdom enough to know Beelzebub from St. Peter any day in the week.'

"Upon this," continued the veteran, "old humpy looked as white as a turnip, and pretty soon give us more room than company. Well,

I was at the parson's that night, waiting for an answer to my Bill's scrap o' paper, which I carried to Nell, his wife, who was maid to the minister's sister till my Will married her, when I hears high words in the parlour; so says I, holden the prettiest little fingers in my hand (here our hero's thoughts reverted to those he had so lately touched, and permitted this digression of the poor old man's to pass with the usual indication of impatience), I heard our minister say, 'No, sir,' I received a warning concerning your interference from my predecessor.' The door was just then set ajar, and I sees 'im scringing at the minister's words, most especial as the curate was also present afore him."

"And where is the curate now?" asked Harold, impatiently.

"Gone into foreign parts with a new wife."

"Do you not know where—in what part of the habitable globe he is?" inquired Mr. Dentnoris, with great anxiety.

"Not a bit—not a bit; but Mr. Sommers is here still."

"And what of him?" rejoined Harold.

"Of him! Oh! not much, to be sure, unless the minister told him about it, which isn't like, I takes it."

"Continue, I entreat you," said the Rector, fearing another break in the old man's narrative.

"Well—where was I? oh, I remembers me—I was tellen that the dumpty old villain made answer about wanten to get a sight of some certificates, or registers, or somewhat, when our minister, as though speaking once for all, says, looken all the while like any lord, and standen on his two legs like a bishop, and taking a power of a look into the blinky eyes of the gemman, and frownen on un, like the frown of a angel, says he—'I know you, in spite of your assumed name and disguises — begone — or, as there is a law in Heaven, you shall rue the fearful odds.' Well,

after all this theatenin o' the minister, and Jim Sloe's caution, the certificates was cut o' every book; and how 'twas done the saints above know best—else nothing at all about it—for as 'twas, more than mortal skill did it, I am pretty certain."

"What became of the gentleman?" asked the distressed Harold.

"I don't know; he hasn't been heard of since in these parts, tho' he has a house nineteen mile off, somewhere. Now, your lorship," said the old peasant, invitingly, "here are two seats, and I've got beer, and a crust or two, and a wee bit o' bacon—but I takes it, 'tis a losen ceremony to court your takin it."

"We thank you, equally, friend; but having lunched at the Travellers' inn, our hunger has been wholly satisfied; but can you not put us in the way to arrive at any distinct information?"

"Sure I can, if ye will call to-morrow.

Just now I feels my rheumatis come fresh again."

Having comfortably ensconced old Joseph in his chimney corner, beside a blazing fire, and tended by his fellow-lodger, our travellers retraced their steps to the town, busy in expressing a thousand doubts and hopes connected with the wonderfully disclosed clue towards the proof of Harold's legitimacy.

"Let us calm our fears, and await the coming morrow, with patience and thankfulness," said the Rector, who, a few moments after, poured forth the burthen of his soul at the footstool of his Lord; giving praise where praise was due, and in humble adoration confessing whence every goodness flows. And soon the dreams of Harold Dentnoris painted pleasant pictures, built him castles and rich hopes—among which, not the least dear of the brightening scene was Mary Clairlowe's coy acceptance of his love.

CHAPTER XII.

"Oh! not for mortal tear
Doth Nature deviate from her calm career,
Nor is the Earth less laughing, or less fair,
Though breaking hearts her gladness may not share."
MRS. HEMANS.

THE return of Mr. Beverley Dentnoris, unaccompanied by his nephew, occasioned great astonishment to all but Lady Wilverton, who maintained a calm indifference on the subject, perfectly inexplicable to the younger part of her late guests, and by Mary considered as particularly cold and unamiable; for though the family of Colonel Clairlowe had quitted the Rectory, few days passed without a meeting; Miss Clairlowe preferring George's com-

panionship in her rides to that of either Lodwick or Sir William. Gertrude, too, had entered into a compact to assist her little friend Sarah in finishing the white embroidered carriage bag, intended as one among the many bridal gifts for Miss Herberton.

"It is exceedingly odd," observed Colonel Clairlowe to his lady, as they retired to rest the night following Mr. Dentnoris' arrival; "very odd that Mr. Harold should remain behind, in a place where he knows nobody—not a soul. Do you know, my dear, I am afraid Marianne Wilverton guessed at my anxiety about Mary."

"One could not be surprised, I am sure, Colonel, that you should be anxious to avoid seeing the bar sinister on your daughter's carriage; and Mr. Harold is not a person to be easily forgotten by any girl; I never saw so perfect a gentleman, in mind and manner, as he is."

"And you know, my dear, I would be the

last man in the world to distress him intentionally by any evident mark of disapprobation; yet, if it can be avoided, the better. I could not bear the thought of annoying him or Mary."

"Yes, yes, we all know that, my dear husband," replied his wife; "he is so very superior to most young men now-a-days. Only hear this; I was enumerating the expected guests for Loder Castle, simply with a view to discover if he was one, when Marianne interrupted me by saying, 'No, not Harold, omit his name on your list—he has written to decline; Percy, however, has insisted on his spending June with him. To this plan Harold has consented;' thus, you perceive, we have the chance of making the gay Percy drive Mr. Dentnoris out of Mary's head."

"Never!" ejaculated the Colonel, heartily; "Never! or she is not my daughter."

"Well, then, could you wish her to accept him?"

"No, my dear; in the first place Harold, I am persuaded, would never allow a word of love to escape him, though his looks are sometimes full of it; and, if he wooed her, Mary would not accept him without our consent."

"But could you withhold it, her happiness at stake?"

"Withhold it! yes, 'twould be monstrous strange if I did not. I tell you, Mary will not give us the trial; and, upon my word, I am sorry he has declined meeting us at Loder."

"You are singularly inconsistent for once, Colonel Clairlowe," replied his wife: "you would, and you would not, have Mary subject to a temptation of the sort."

"No, my dear, I would and I would not have Mary united to Harold Dentnoris. It's odd, very odd! Heaven's decrees often puzzle us poor mortals greatly. Here is the perfection of a man rendered miserable for life; at all events, if not miserable, extremely un-

settled, from the obstinate indulgence of impulsive passion and overweening pride in his parents. Do not, however, mention this to Mary, my poor girl; I see a good deal farther than she imagines into the intercourse between her heart and reason. She hopes to meet young Dentnoris at Loder Castle, else not a bit of it would she have shaken hands with him so merrily the night before he left. Ah!" continued the warm-hearted father, "he knew, you see, that they would be strangers for a longer while than she conceived; *that* it was brought the tear to course his cheek, when locked in his grasp was the hand he longed to kiss and press to his bosom, yet dared not retain for a second longer than the formality of friendship prescribed. Ah, I know what the poor fellow felt, well! it's very odd—God bless him."

"Yet that tear, Clairlowe, was not half so sad as the calm look I have so frequently de-

tected, when Mary's averted eyes were unconscious of his observation."

"The tear!" pronounced the Colonel, with emphasis; "Jane, there was the tear—poor things."

"Well, dear husband, let us commit her happiness to the All Merciful; he tempers the wind to the shorn lamb; he too has produced good from evil before now."

"So, so, he hath done all things well—but it's odd, very odd!"

And the kind old pair were soon fast asleep, forgetful of this world's dull speculations.

CHAPTER XIII.

Oh, how this spring of love resembleth
  The uncertain glory of an April day;
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,
  And by-and-bye a cloud takes all away.
TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

He would say untruths; and be ever double,
Both in his words and meaning; he was never,
But where he meant to ruin, pitiful!
KING HENRY THE EIGHTH.

ON the day preceding the intended visit to Loder Castle, Mary and Gertrude were alone, and their conversation naturally turned upon the past and coming events.

"To-morrow, Gertry, we leave this dear Grange for Loder Castle; George has pro-

mised to be a very regular correspondent; we should be much happier without Charlotte Herberton."

"Perhaps not, Mary; the affianced bride may help to divert Mr. Percy's attentions from yourself, without the chance of being proclaimed eligible for the wifeship upon a week's notice."

"How absurd our calculations are; yet one cannot avoid recurring to that silly letter. I have no doubt the victim has been kept in blissful ignorance of all expected from him. Ah, yes, Charlotte is a lady most decidedly desirable for such happy interruption to the series of attentions written, bound, and published, in octavo, by his anything save 'ambitious mother;' Charlotte has made herself very agreeable during the past two months, Mary."

"For this reason, her handsome lover has exerted a strange influence over her waywardness; besides, she admires herself the more

complacently for having attracted a man of such excellent reputation and importance—'The observed of all observers;' well she might be gentle and happy under such circumstances."

"You are cruel to her, Mary."

"Not at all! Every one acknowledges the same opinion; even Lord and Lady Herberton continually expostulate with her on her attempts to evince the power she possesses over her 'elected one;' her heart has many channels."

"Fie, Mary! however, here is Mr. Dentnoris' carriage!"

Miss Clairlowe's cheek suffused at the sound of the charmed name.

"Really!" she said: "Alas! how brief our visit has appeared."

"You have sadly changed your mind, my cousin, concerning this intended week at Loder; but I fear there is disappointment in it. Is there, Mary, despite thy confused phi-

losophy, as you yourself termed it an hour ago?" and while she spoke Gertrude read her answer in the deep sigh, and subdued mirth, of the sweet girl beside her.

"I will follow, Gertrude," she answered, reluctantly viewing the packages around her, telling, as they did, of the morrow's leave taking. She had received the information that Mr. Harold Dentnoris would not form one of the party at the castle, and clung to the spot wherein he would shortly stand, with passionate tenacity; the path before her was clouded and obscure—the sun her heart had lighted was removed—blank, desert, seemed the Eden of her thoughts—one hour previously even the dismal portmanteaus wore their *couleur de rose*, and looked happily enough. Alas! how their colours and their forms had changed, and to poor Mary's heart seemed more like muffled effigies of funereal rites; all things had been transformed, for Mary's heart was sad. She longed to communicate the in-

telligence to her cousin, yet the dread of the quiet sympathy with which Gertrude would assail her, prevented it.

The luncheon of that short day being over, Miss Clairlowe proposed that George should accompany her for a ride, and accordingly flitted off with her admiring equerry.

By some mysterious intuition, the young gentleman had discovered that to talk of his brother, and please his companion, were synonymous in the end; consequently half a mile was scarcely traversed when her silence was broken in reply to George's observation.

"Miss Clairlowe, you have been so dull all the morning, I could not tell you something I wished so much to say. I have the merriest letter from Harold that he ever wrote—to me, at least—here it is, read it for yourself, if you like;" and the boy evidently requested no heavy task by intreating her to read the well remembered characters of his brother's hand. Once, and once only, when in Venice, a note of accept-

ance to an invitation had fallen into Mary Clairlowe's hands, and still remained buried in the depth of her writing case.

Why did she fear that other eyes should trace the words of that simple document?

In that now before her there was but a small share of information; albeit, the affectionate girl saw beauty in each line, and wisdom in each sentence—especially in the concluding page, which, after all, seemed scarcely to possess a meaning to an uninterested observer; it ran thus:—

"I never permit such large men as yourself, or Charles Bacon, to give very kind messages to young ladies; so you need only deliver formally my kindest compliments to Miss Clairlowe, to Miss Grey of all people, and recollect, my dear boy, never to call your lovely friend 'Mary.'"

The heart that thrilled at the perusal of her

own name, written by the loved hand of one whose "fickle liking" had made up that day's dream, was warmly beating a response to "the kindest compliments," when George, fancying his impertinent mention of her to his brother had caused displeasure, deprecatingly intreated her to speak again.

"Really, Miss Clairlowe, you must not be offended at that last part, where Harold accuses me of calling you by your Christian name. I only did it because I thought it a good excuse to use the name he likes best of all in the world; and Aunt Marianne told me to write everything that would please and interest him in his anxious solitude."

"Anxious solitude, George! Why is he anxious?"

"I cannot tell; Aunt Marianne would have told us if we ought to know more about it. She knows how dearly we love Harold."

Mary hushed her breath; the words appeared to sound as though they had passed

from her own heart to echo in the ambient air; a melody of distant music waked in her bosom—again a question roused her.

"Ah, I can see plainly you are pretending to be angry, but your nice true eyes will not tell a story; besides, now you have heard the reason, and like me well enough to like my brother, you ought not to be sorry—that's all, Miss Clairlowe."

Mary's eyes assuredly would have belied her feelings had she felt disposed to quarrel with the animated speaker.

"And can you forgive me," continued her companion. "Shall we talk again, or canter?"

"Talk, talk," answered Mary, rapidly; "but ought I not to scold you for such extreme forgetfulness of my dignity! Nevertheless, I will show you that I am not injured beyond remedy, by desiring you henceforth to write 'Mary' instead of Miss Clairlowe."

"Now, I am really glad, and shall acquaint

Harold that I understand what will please a lady almost as well as he can tell me," exclaimed George, playfully.

"Tell him, too," added Mary, "that if we had leisure, we would send him a homily, addressed to a gay wanderer."

Miss Clairlowe had, during the past week, been schooling her imagination to receive Mr. Harold Dentnoris into her heart, upon the same terms that Lodwick lived there. She had drawn her multitude of thoughts to a conclusion, determining to be his warm unchanging friend, aware that one insuperable impediment existed to the idea of any nearer tie.

Alas! Mary Clairlowe, such resolutions have been framed before—how fruitlessly.

"What a singularly impulsive girl Charlotte Herberton is," said Miss Grey, hastening to meet her cousin as the equestrians dismounted on their return. "She declines accompanying us to-morrow, as the marriage is to take

place to-morrow week. It is hurried on account of some domestic concern relating to Lord Delvor's family."

"Indeed! how suddenly determined on, after such repeated delays."

"And Mrs. Clairlowe has written to postpone our visit to Loder, so that we have only to pass the two days at Hatfield, and return here."

"How glad I am," exclaimed George; "and so will Sarah be."

The morning of the appointed day rose clear and bright, and beautiful, although cold; tranquil nature still wore her hard and silvery garment of hoar frost, her bleak front had lost its chillingness, the bared forest trees had discarded their draperies of snow, the birds sang more blithely, the village tenantry donned their gala dresses, while plumes of spring flowers, which had apparently been forewarned to struggle into beauty in the close corners of the humble cottages, mingling with the healthy

floral gifts of the happy "Grange gardeners," were ranged into glad trophies to grace the pathway of Lord Delvor's bride.

In the ancient hall of the Herbertons were assembled many a noble scion of our land—beauty, wealth, renown, brave and honourable men, women in mute holiness helped to form that circle of proud high hearts and elevated greatness. The Conqueror, England's dearest friend and patriot, moved in that sparkling throng, and the brilliant genius of Love's poetess smiled upon the lot of the beloved one.

The bridal veil enveloped the rich form of Miss Herberton, the diamond aigrette's blaze dazzled upon the brightness of her brow, her long black tresses of heavy curls beamed glossier in their bright and half-concealed magnificence. Her round and tapered fingers, ringless, save for one glittering gem, escaped their blonde imprisonment to show more distinctly how very beautiful they were.

The maiden spoke her vows, and the proud old lord placed the hand of his only child in the burning clasp of her betrothed. The signal link united them! Charlotte Delvor blushed, kneeled, and rose again, a bride. The last sigh was breathed upon her father's name, and the merry bells pealed forth as the splendid cortége left the portal of the venerable pile.

Once more at home, Lady Herberton stole to her daughter, kissed the varying cheek, and led her darling from friends who pressed too eagerly around. Man's ceremony of avowal, the church's rite, was over, the heavy door swung back upon its ponderous hinges, for the mother had relinquished that golden-linked hand, and, sobbing in jealous fondness, had bidden her child adieu, and taking the Duke's offered arm, passed into the sumptuous banquet hall. Blessings were uttered, the voice of gaiety went forth, yet there were tender wailings on that solemn morning.

Jest and laughter filled the servants' hall—

the foaming tankard was busy in its work of happiness, and Lethe could scarcely have done more in levelling hopes and wishes; each tone seemed redolent of joyousness. In the saloon the aristocracy of sound was heard, and with it well-recounted themes of pleasant memory, so gladsome was that throng, that few could think a sad heart reigned among them. Yet one was wretched, and some were unhappy.

The nuptial ceremony had commenced before Miss Grey suspected the proximity of Sir Brook Emmersly. She believed he had not arrived in England. None had mentioned him, and she dared not inquire; as usual, she had returned with her aunt and cousins the preceding night, and during the morning lingered in her quiet room—even Mary knew nothing of his coming; and though Gertrude's heart for ever felt him near, and listened to his voice, the visionary presence disturbed her not, and she believed it possible she could even meet him coldly and tranquilly, till an accent,

too quickly recognised, responded the "Amen." Gertrude ventured not to turn—she knew the tone was his, and summoned to her aid the utmost energy of mind to meet his scrutiny with cold indifference. The effort proved successful, and she rose from her kneeling posture to receive upon her heart once more the look so loved and feared; but she trembled not, shrank not from the distressing encounter. A wild resolve enabled her to baffle the intense gaze of her persecutor, and Brook Emmersly wondered unabashed at the dignified reserve, over which his smile had no dominion.

The muttered half derisive response to the holy vow surprised Miss Clairlowe equally with her cousin, and she turned with fearful apprehension, dreading its effect upon the already suffering frame—but there was no sign of agitation in Miss Grey's manner—the uneasy timid Gertrude stood erect; even the dark eyes looked undisturbed, and her lip quivered

not as she replied, when the voice of other days addressed her.

"Miss Grey, I fear you are oppressed by the heat of this crowded room," observed Sir Brook, bending to return the kerchief she had dropped.

"No, I think it only too agreeable; yet I thank you."

Mary was charmed—she had been an anxious spectator of the meeting. She had learned, too, to understand how much Sir Brook "hated philosophy in women," as he termed every good feeling at variance with his impetuous inclinations; and now there was rejoicing in her mind, to see him thus proudly humiliated by his victim—to see what Gertrude Grey could not—his composure ruffled, and the boasted sang-froid dispelled! For the first time in his "thread of spoils" Brook Emmersly felt himself the entangled!

There was nothing astonishing in their

meeting him at the Grange—they expected the presence of so intimate a friend of the family. The only surprise emanated from his unannounced reappearance, and the absence of the Rector's family.

According to the order of such assemblies, the guests dispersed, while Gertrude, overpowered by the efforts she had made, shrank from the idea of answering the inquiries it was but natural her aunt would make concerning her hectic cheek and burning brow; yet unwilling that her movements should indicate a wish to avoid one who might perhaps express contrition, and return her sigh for sigh, if not disdainfully rejected.

Gertrude pictured him as the erring prodigal; and if He who knew no guile received again the wandering son, ought she to shut up every pathway to redemption from the sin of "so forsaking her?" Musing on this returning train of fancies, Miss Grey threw herself on a couch behind the drapery of the heavy cur-

tain, remote from the few who had gathered in a circle to discuss the various incidents of the day.

A faintness overcame the agitated girl—her lips refused their office—she could neither move nor speak. Sir Brook was the first to perceive her indisposition, and, scrupling but one moment, walked hastily towards her. Gertrude shrieked and fell, when, instantly perceiving the mischief he had done, Sir Brook called for assistance, and, lifting the fainted form to its place of rest, discovered that which made even his adamantine feelings quail—Gertrude Grey a faded faultless shadow of her former self. The heart his treachery had wrecked was a few months since buoyant with healthful pulses. Brook pitied her, but blamed not the man who wrought the destruction. No! Sir Brook Emmersly had made it his profession, and triumphed in conquest.

Colonel Clairlowe flew to answer the summons.

"Sir Brook!" said he, angrily, "I am afraid my little girl may thank your presence for this death-like swoon. I cannot request you to leave a house as much your privilege to remain in as my own, but I will beg of you, as a gentleman, to afford me an explanation of this matter elsewhere. Nay! touch her not," added the enraged soldier, observing Sir Brook advancing to the sofa; "touch her not, I say, or, by Heaven, I will destroy you where you stand."

Miss Clairlowe and several domestics had by this time taken charge of the insensible Gertrude.

"Oh, make some sign of life, dearest Gertry," said Mary; "give me some token that you still live. Oh, do not look so dead and cold, Gertry. Will no warmth come?" Again she chafed the hand of her cousin, and kissed the marble forehead.

The author of so much misery leant against the wall, now a very statue of Despair and heed-

less of Colonel Clairlowe's appeal. He seemed to have concentred thought, motion, and feeling, into one hard, labouring sigh of miserable solicitude; he spoke not, but mutely, as if in terror, gazed upon his work.

The deception succeeded.

Miss Clairlowe witnessing the assumed agony of sorrow, and almost repenting her denouncement of him, implored her father also to relent, and respect the tribute of a lover's grief.

"He grieves not!" muttered the Colonel, turning to speak to the physician, who that moment entered the room; then, taking the clay-cold palm of his beloved niece within his own, whispered rather than spoke, "Perfidy!"

Nevertheless, with all their watching and their love, Brook Emmersly was the quickest to discern returning animation.

"She breathes! by the bright sky," he exclaimed, "she breathes!" and, clasping his hands, he sank on his knees, gazing fondly on the opening eyelids of the doomed one, till a faintly

articulated "Brook" invited him to her side; then, in stilly passionate tones, he demanded pardon for his apparent indifference.

She thought not of the past; that pale beautiful girl remembered a dreamy something about joy and him; there was no harsh resentment; her dormant senses had not yet reawakened to the memory of slight, sorrow, and desertion; he was near, and all the world was one glad sun.

"Do you forgive me, Gertrude?" asked the perjured.

"Oh yes! yet why forgive? Where—where am I—can I forgive? Mary, are you there?" asked a scarcely earthly tone. "Lift me up; are we in heaven? have we left the earth? is Brook here? Mamma! and—you here! near poor lorn Gertrude once again. No! oh no!" screamed the pale victim, sinking again into insensibility.

Colonel Clairlowe's rage burst forth afresh on hearing the delirious wanderings, notwith-

standing the mild responses of the young Baronet to his repeated maledictions.

Gertrude again rallied from her unconscious swoonings; whereupon the irritated Colonel resolutely determined to vent his resentment in full on the obnoxious Sir Brook.

"I request you will be good enough to afford me every necessary explanation as soon as possible, sir," exclaimed the stern soldier, walking towards the door.

"I accompany you with the greatest pleasure, my dear sir;" and once more the unresisting hand of the invalid was carried to his lips; a few whispered words of kindness, a graceful acknowledgment of gratitude to Mary, and, with that air of elegant ease for which he was celebrated, the heartless traitor followed the affectionate but imperious Colonel Clairlowe to the library.

The result of this conference was never ascertained; the old soldier looked unsatisfied,

yet consoled; and Gertrude, with her heart re-lighted into love for the destroyer, snatched from the lacquey a sealed note, out of which hope had already read a thousand prayers for pardon—a thousand thoughts more exquisite for their long silence.

She read the words of that brief missive, shuddered, and strewed its fragments on the ground. No faintness overcame her—affection had again resigned its empire—Gertrude's heart's last chord had broken. "Suffice it, that I can tell you no more, dear Mary, but that we shall never meet again," was the single remark.

"Not you and I, Gertry?"

"Not Sir Brook Emmersly and Gertrude Grey," she murmured, in the low, hollow accents of unmitigated despair.

"Cruel, wicked man!" sighed Mary.

"Villain! wretch!" was the only echo; and the name of Brook Emmersly became a prohibited sound.

"Alas! that man should ever win
So sweet a shrine to death and sin
As woman's heart."

When Lodwick returned from witnessing the diversions among the villagers, he was painfully affected to find his cousin suffering from the recent agitating interview; sincerely upbraiding himself for the jealous madness which had driven him from her side, when his arm might have assisted, and his presence precluded the opportunity, he instinctively felt convinced that Sir Brook would seek for a renewal of his protestations to his neglected love. Lodwick Clairlowe had too warm a heart to blame him for such an effort to regain what he esteemed beyond all price; he knew also equally well, that he could not act the calm beholder of their affection; therefore, for the purpose of avoiding the misery of looking sadly upon Gertrude, he took refuge among a party of gentlemen who were issuing forth on

a visit to the schools and sports of the peasantry.

Lodwick Clairlowe was impetuous, but trustful; he had that morning, for the first time, been introduced to Sir Brook, and confessed himself singularly prepossessed by his stately pride and undeviating blandness.

The ardent temperament of our young friend took alarm at the prospect of the odds against this formidable rival, when, more in sorrow than despair, he left him in the field, uncompeted with and alone. Now, however, he heard that for the second time Sir Brook had rejected the golden sceptre within his reach, his sorrow changed to firm determination; resentment heated every vein, despite the lurking sentiment of gratitude and relief, arising from the certainty of his absence and relinquishment of the prize he himself would have died to gain.

And, burning with one wild hope, that by patient devotion he might at no very distant

period become the declared and accepted lover of Gertrude Grey, he bounded up the vast staircase to the drawing-room.

Ida Deschamps was to have been numbered among the wedding guests, and the wherefores concerning her non-arrival were soon forgotten; she was not present, and few lamented it.

CHAPTER XIV.

It likes us well:
And, at our more convenient time we'll read,
Answer, and think upon, this business.

SHAKSPEARE.

Such were thy fathers; thus preserve their name;
Not heirs to titles only, but to fame
The hour draws nigh, a few brief days will close
To me this little scene of joys and woes.

BYRON.

IMMEDIATELY after the departure of Mr. Dentnoris from Norton Valence, Harold, as he had promised the sexton, betook himself and portmanteau to a cottage adjoining his rustic dwelling, in which a small room had been prepared for his uncle, and another, even more limited in its dimensions, for himself.

To the great sorrow of our hero, he found the old man unable to rise from his bed; a cold, from which scarcely recovered, when he ventured out for a gossip with Jim Sloe, on the previous day, had alarmingly increased, and its ravages were but too apparent. Night arrived —still no improvement; the next morning his feeble limbs hung useless. Harold Dentnoris watched with unremitting anxiety till the fourth day, when a decided improvement took place, and, supported on soft cushions, supplied by the assiduous Harold, the veteran sat up to resume the tale of 'long ago,' inexpressibly important to the now sanguine heir.

"I wish I could live to see ye fairly done by, your lorship," said the dying man; "but that's neither here nor there, if I put ye in the way afore I slips off to the world above."

"Talk not thus, my friend, though the dearest ambition of my life be crushed, and your efforts to redeem my worldly portion prove of no avail."

"No avail!" repeated the old peasant. "No, no! I have got somewhat to reveal which will tame a difficulty and settle the business for Humpy; if I remember rightly, you said as 'twas he who'd got the title. Ah, ah! his comen here never roused the wisdom o' my old brain; I couldn't a thought o' your lordship alongside such an old sketch of the wicked one;—I'd a rectified the mistakes, long before; but sure I never guessed anything could go wrong about your name and wealth.

"Is Jim Sloe here?" asked Joseph; "cause he must be witness—and there's Paget, too, as might be coming in; I would be more glad-like to have a second o' your side, your lor-ship, for I fear I shan't last long: seeing I've been ninety-four year a climben up the narry road to the skies—ay, to the skies!—for God's mercy will save the contrite sinner for the Lord Jesus' sake," continued the faltering old man, raising his thin bony hands prayer-fully.

"Is Paget come in? for my sight is failing fast."

"Yes, here am I, Joe," replied a fine-looking farmer's lad; "and sorry enough to see the rheumatis teazing ye again."

"I was remembering me," said the weakening voice, unmindful of the neighbourly address, "your lorship, of that night when your father called me up, at ten o'clock, and says, says he—'Come now, Joe, let me sit by your fire, and chat a bit; there's old Harry to play at home. My lady mother has found out that I returned to England on account of my old flame's widowhood, and not to court the Duke's daughter.'

"'Aye,' says I, 'and why shouldn't ye?'

"'I can't tell; but will you help me?'

"'I help you! Well, this is a pretty go.'

"'Yes, you know I have 10,000*l*. a-year, independent.'

"'Oh, for the matter o' that,' says I, 'the lady have got enough for both, let alone

two more; but tisn't right to baffle against duty.'

"'Duty,' says his lorship—'Duty, my good fellow,' (them was his words,) 'I can't exactly love according to duty, when the duty is to consist in marrying a wife chosen by any one but myself. I surely am old enough to choose without my mother's assistance.'

"'And plenty o' time to think about it,' I makes answer, 'seeing that Mrs. Wilson must wait a twelvemonth and a day, and there's only five months gone yet.'

"'Oh!' says he, replying, 'That's just what I came to talk about.'

"You looks, your lorship," continued the old man, addressing Harold, "most frequent as your father did then.

"'Well,' says he, 'you know, Joe, how near I broke my heart when Miss Barrington's marriage came off; was it not for this distress that I left the kingdom; when I heard she loved him, and was cold as driven snow to me;

and does it not seem Providence who has freed her once again to make me happy.'

"'It do seem somehow providential,' says I; 'and if you like to marry her for love, I'll make it bear that paintin in my mind.'

"'Now you see, Joe,' says his lorship, 'if we are not quick, something may prevent it again; so I want you and your wife to go to Norton Valence in ——shire with us, and be witnesses to the marriage. I will go first and secure a snug cottage for you, and you shall have ten shillings a week for life afterwards. The Duke of —— was my father's friend, and I can stay in his empty house very comfortable till all is over, without exciting suspicion, the family being gone into foreign parts, all but the best of them, Lord Tom.'

"Well, we discoursed on the subject till the break of a bright dawn, and I thought that the token proclaimed it a good cause; so we settled all our scores, and away went his lorship, who got the sexton's place for me, and this here

cottage. Nor from that day to this have I seen my native soil, or the place where your people dwells, your lorship, and where ye shall dwell long and gladsomely, please Almighty God. Sure Sally's in her cold grave, awaiten for the Judgment day; will ye put me close beside her mound, your lorship? Promise me that one solemn thing afore I changes into clay?"

"Ah, yes, that and more, when it shall please God to take you, my father's good and faithful friend; but I pray you may be spared long yet, for both our sakes."

"Now I likes that speech, and I trusts ye for it—you would not fling a curtain 'fore my eyes as the last warning's coming."

A few minutes' silence followed, when the narrator again resumed his tale.

"Two days after we got here, we had directions to look out for Mrs. Wilson's coming to that little house above the hill, and to send bits o' paper to the minister directly they come

to hand—which we did—and next day, true to time, a carriage drives up the road you sees from this window, turnen to that same dwellin house yonder. Sally calls out to me, 'Why, Joe, Mrs. Wilson's all alone of herself in the black carriage.' 'Oh,' says I, answering, 'his lorship ain't far behind, then, I'm pretty sure, so you'd best clap on your bonnet and stand in the porch till they draws up.' Well, away she sped like flame. I went up to the place to see all right by the time they'd come from church, for his lorship told me aforehand 'twant no use to ask the lady to rest there first; so straight to that church they went," said the old man, earnestly, pointing with his attenuated finger to the spire just discernible between thick branches of gnarled oaks, "the curate stood father, and he is liven now to tell."

"But where?" inquired the thankful Harold.

"That's more nor I can say. Well, by waiten, I gets a sight of the beautifullest lady

as ever stepped in Britain. His lorship came shinen down the wood side wi' her, as though he followed a dropping star, and they two was tied as tight as God and man could bind um, and their names was writ in the parish book, and a copy of that same my Sal had somewhere. 'For,' says she, 'it isn't likely that I'll see the likes of such kind gentlefolks beneath the high firmament no more.'"

"And where is the certain proof of my legitimate birth?" inquired Harold, endeavouring almost in vain to speak tranquilly to the nearly exhausted Joseph.

"I got it somewhere. No! Anne has taken it along with her mother's books—them the minister gave her— poor Sal! Well, your lordship, don't be dashed; we'll find them easy, any how."

"Oh, forgive my painful anxiety," replied Harold.

"Forgive! I understand ye, your lorship. No need of forgiveness when never a harm's

been done. Well, to continue," said the trembling voice, "I have little more to say, but that your lorship jumped into the world a long time arter that. Howsomever, it was at that same dwellin house you first unclosed your eyes upon your mother."

"God bless and prosper you for the joy you have given my almost failing hope. God bless you," repeated Harold, grasping the hand of the veteran.

He felt the pressure gently returned—a chill and sudden shudder succeeded, and the head of the old man fell heavily on one side. Harold clasped the chilly hand of death. Joe's thread of existence had broken—he was dead!

Dismayed and oppressed, Dentnoris busied himself by attending to the call of humanity. The physician quickly arrived, but alas! the blameless life had ceased. The heart so lately panting in warm devotedness to Harold's cause was still—its beating done.

For one long anxious week our hero gazed

on the inanimate features, as if vainly hoping to mark some sign of motion in the decaying corpse. None came—it lay still in the cold sleep of Death, and at the same hour in which the Rector's remains were embosomed in a costly tomb, the aged sexton's humble mound was raised beside it.

Harold turned from the melancholy spot, about to quit the precincts of his friend's last quiet bed, when his attention was arrested by the stranger of the "Travellers' Inn."

"I have been seeking you throughout the town, sir," said he, "and hope you will pardon my intrusive address. I merely wish to inquire if the gentleman I had the pleasure of seeing in your company some days since was Mr. Beverley Dentnoris?"

"It was," replied Harold, relieved to find one among the peopled crowd to pronounce the name of a relation. "Mr. Dentnoris will be here to-morrow evening, I hope," rejoined the nephew. "Will you in the mean time favour

me with your name, that I may inform you of his arrival?"

After further conversation, Harold learned that important bequests of the late Rector waited to be delivered to his uncle.

Good afternoons were exchanged, and the gentlemen separated, each to fulfil most opposite errands—Harold to bewail the loss of every living witness to his father's marriage, except one, who unfortunately could only be reached through the medium of advertisement, and this at a moment when the most cautious measures were necessary, in order to prevent the injurious machinations of his inveterate, though unknown, enemies — the barrister to comfort and console a widowed sister.

The next day passed, and with its evening came the expected companion of his hopes and fears, who, fatigued and weary, gladly hailed the cheerful preparations for dinner.

The events of the preceding week were

quickly told, and a note written, intimating to Mr. Slade the return of the newly appointed Rector, at the same time saying that business of the utmost importance made his presence immediately desirable.

The worthy barrister, impelled by the fantastic visions of a bottle of old port, &c., sent a verbal reply, that he would join them with all possible expedition; and forthwith mounting his pony, galloped off to the cottage of his incipient clients, having previously requested the county attorney to attend him there.

Facts as they had occurred were related, the result of which seemed to the insignificant looking personage attending Mr. Slade, alone satisfactory. The learned man entered into abstruse technicalities, viewing the case through a variety of media, rapidly glancing at the mysterious disappearance of all living witnesses, ridiculing indirectly the idea of so important a secret being accidentally kept—

distressing the two eager listeners with numerous anecdotes of absurd inventions, and finally throwing the whole subject into a chaos of objectives, he quaintly commenced cross-questioning Mr. Beverley Dentnoris. Harold, enraged beyond control at the tortuous verboseness of the lawyer, paced to and fro, unable to reply calmly.

Not so the Rector—he felt an extraordinary prepossession steal upon his mind on their first introduction at the inn, and read in the changes of the stranger's benevolent exterior, virtues irreconcilable with his present denunciation of the case at issue—he simply wished to assure the man of law that he had formed an erroneous judgment, and peacefully awaited the convenient moment for so doing, convinced that prejudiced excitement in his profession concealed the humanity of his heart. Nevertheless, *malgrè* this generous conclusion, he no longer resolved to trust the affair to his hands.

"I am sorry that the lateness of the hour

obliges me to request the subject may be deferred to some future day. Perhaps the difficulties are not so insuperable as you suppose, sir," continued he, turning to the barrister. "I confess to you my mind is more sanguine on the subject."

"So entire a labyrinth of opposing facts do I perceive, begging your pardon, sir," replied that gentleman, "that I must revoke even the indefinite hope, inadvertently given, prior to the development of minutiæ, which appear absurdly self-evident against the probability of establishing your claims; and really, gentlemen, may I be pardoned," added he, turning a meaning smile to the crabbed little solicitor—"may I, I repeat, be in consequence pardoned, for declining to interfere in so chimerical and complicated a business? I am by far too idle and wealthy to undertake difficult cases, and my hands, too, are quite full, very full, at present. It is usual, Mr. Dentnoris," he continued, facetiously, "to remunerate every

man for his work, be it never so unimportant a service with which we brief-makers have the gratification to accommodate you: this celebrated gentleman, therefore, will do himself the honour to make his charge—as for me, I must be going."

A sinister expression of wondering complacency covered the usually dull face of the obnoxious little drudge, when Mr. Dentnoris placed the remuneration on the table by which he stood, declining at the same moment his future services. The door closed, and the sordid "limb of law" departed.

Mr. Slade lingered in the comfortable corner, till assured of the man's welcome exit. There was something in the bearing and tone of the individual now standing before them, (for the barrister had risen to take his leave), which, notwithstanding Harold's former repugnance, commanded admiration.

How incomprehensible, thought he; I have the most utter contempt for the opinion of this

worthy, and yet I am actually contemplating his gestures and tone, even his words, with absolute liking.

"I fear that I infringe on good manners, by remaining after your unequivocal hint to take myself off, my dear sir," said the object of his meditation; "moreover, I am detaining you from rest, after a tedious journey; but if you will allow me to visit you, concerning the fixtures, &c., at the Rectory, at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning, I will appear on my own responsibility; and I trust the information I will bring may decide you respecting them, at once, as my poor sister is anxious to get them taken at a valuation." A slight bow from Mr. Dentnoris, a half-muttered response from his nephew, the cottage-door creaked on its hinges, and again our travellers were alone.

"Harold, do not look oppressed; there is a sincerity, void of hypocrisy, in that stranger's manner, that, in defiance of his reasoning,

draws my better thoughts towards him; do you know I felt comforted by those few words of his adieu?"

"Comforted," exclaimed Harold—"comforted, uncle! You surely could not have clearly understood that lazy ignominious speech of his?"

"I believe I heard, and understood it, Harold, my dear boy; and if you will listen calmly, will give my opinion of it also."

"I listen," replied the desponding nephew.

"In the first place, Harold, did you catch the true expression of Mr. Slade's intelligent countenance?"

"I saw the smile he turned to the sneaking wretch who accompanied him."

"That smile was only assumed. I am a faulty physiognomist if, beneath his natural smile, lighting that open brow, there be not a soul of integrity and lofty faculties, of which we have felt the severer and professional part

only. What was his purpose in dismissing his attendant so unexpectedly? Let us know him better before we condemn him, Harold."

"Well, dear sir—and your defence of the subtle Norton Valence solicitor?"

"Of him, Harold—why, I must see him no more: and in allowing the recollection of his unpleasing manner to escape my memory, avoid the judgment my sinful heart longs to award him."

"Yes, yes! his face and form at least forbid an equal commendation. Would that I had never entered this fatal village; I might have enjoyed a few pleasurable hours, and learned, perhaps, to bear with magnanimity an unavertable doom," said the young Dentnoris.

"Harold, we have hope and faith in One who never left the fatherless unfriended, if they seek His help. I have much to relate concerning home. The Clairlowes—" (Harold started; his uncle had chosen the surest theme to divert him from the deep hopelessness of his

disappointments,) "have left us—they remain at the Grange until March; all are quite well, and desire their best wishes to the truant Lion."

A sigh and brightened look rewarded the good Rector for this kindly scheme to dissipate melancholy, and bring returning summer to his nephew's mind.

"And Aunt Marianne! Sarah! George!" replied Harold: "they, too, are well?"

"Indeed they are: I have large packets for you here. Marianne entreated me to allow Wilson to join you, fearing you would suffer such continual discomfort without him; the man himself importuned me to beg you would send for him. Unfortunately at —— we could only procure one hired riding horse, so I left him to bring on both his and mine to-morrow. I hope I have done well in anticipating your wishes?"

"Decidedly; I shall be glad to see him," said Harold.

"Now, then, good night, my dear boy!"

Mr. Dentnoris never abandoned this juvenile mode of addressing his nephew, though the last time he spoke it, Harold was forty-two, and his uncle just passing to eternity.

"Good night!"

CHAPTER XV.

Would thou hadst less deserved,
That the proportion both of thanks and payment
Might have been mine! only I have left to say,
More is thy due than more than all can pay.

MACBETH

Love is a pearl of purest hue,
But stormy waves are round it;
And dearly may a woman rue
The hour when first she found it.

THE clock struck eleven; the servant announced "Mr. Slade," and that gentleman again presented himself.

Harold's first impulse bade him endeavour to avoid the encounter: the next, to observe the proudly kind manner of their visitor.

"How strikingly different he looks this morning," thought the heir.

"In the first instance, I must engage your pardoning attention to the ruse I employed last night, my dear sirs. The facts are these: —Mr. Arthur Dentnoris (as he is still called in the neighbourhood) has been twice introduced to me by the Duke of ——, with whom I have enjoyed the honour of dining twice, and on each occasion a little paltry rattle-trap—a very fac-simile of Shakspeare's apothecary — has found some good cause, or bad, as the event might have proved, for interrupting our dessert, by requesting permission to speak on urgent business with your relation. It is a few years since we met—nor did I understand, on the occasions of seeing him, that he was other than a household blemish in Mr. Arthur's establishment; but, last night, supposing the attorney of this place might be useful to me, I desired him to meet me here. On dismounting, I perceived a small figure approach

to hold my horse's rein. I was wondering at John's sudden curtailment of proper duties, when the creature uttered a sort of chuckle. The sound grated on my recollection, and the door at that moment opening, I recognised the cringing tool of Mr. Arthur Dentnoris. It was only that morning I heard of his having assumed the title of his brother; and you will no longer be surprised that I should adopt the means I conceived safest for your cause, in persuading the creeping rascal that the case could not be substantiated. The man is perfectly aware that the question is a just and reasonable one; thus, by my turning the tables against you, it gives him leisure to communicate with Mr. Arthur, as he imagines, while we are wrangling—albeit, we shall proceed safely, but slowly. The whole way to my house after quitting you last night, for the attorney awaited my departure, I accordingly disputed your title—till at length the reptile put a question which decided our contest. Suspecting that his master

has only revealed a fourth of the affair, just to give more trouble and display for the talent of the workman—but here comes the adder himself—the worm—the man-eater—pray, be careful to confine our debate to the various household concerns of my brother-in-law. Mum.

"Will you take the fixtures at a valuation, or shall they be removed?" inquired Mr. Slade.

"I really have not yet even walked over the premises," replied the Rector; "a sudden recal to ———, the other day, prevented my doing so."

"Then, will you do me the favour to accept my escort?" asked the Barrister; "I am bent thitherward at this moment."

"I shall be much obliged."

The fussy little solicitor then came forward in search of a glove he had dropped the night previous; and, while this was being restored, the three gentlemen departed towards the Rectory.

With a heart overburdened with grateful

feelings, Harold turned to speak his thankfulness, when the Barrister informed Mr. Dentnoris, "that a bundle of letters, found among the papers of his deceased relative, addressed to the Rev. Beverley Dentnoris, or, in event of his death, to the heirs of Lord Dentnoris, occasioned his anxiety to become acquainted with his companions of the Travellers' Inn; the old hostess having spoken rapturously of you, sir," said he, looking towards Harold, "declaring you to be the picture of a Mrs. Wilson, with whom she lived as housemaid many years agone, and who was afterwards Lady Dentnoris."

"My own mother," exclaimed Harold.

"Yes, young sir! and thus I obtained a clue to the name required by my brother-in-law; but your whereabouts being so impenetrably hidden, I could not discover a leading string to your seclusion; and when we happily did meet, the bare notion of recognising in the lawyer I unwittingly employed, to save myself

the trouble of writing, the tool of your selfish relation, naturally led me to induce the supposition in his mind that I was averse to undertake the proceedings. I deferred, in consequence, the delivering of so important a packet, reserving it for our conference of to-day; however, we cannot be too cautious—nor do I yield my charge till we fairly gain the shelter of the Rectory; then the papers shall be yours; but as long as the panther tracks our path, we will not seem to be meddling with notes or parchment."

The new house of our friends was quickly gained, and the fixtures taken. "Now, then," said Harold, "may we see the letters in your possession, my dear sir?"

"Ah, truly," said the Barrister, thrusting his hand into a capacious pocket; "why, where in the name of Heaven can they be? I have not got them!"

Vainly did they search; no vestige of their newly acquired treasure remained. To pro-

claim the matter publicly would lose them their advantage, and the hoped-for links to fortune fall, perchance, into the hands of the detested Mr. Cole, for such was the name of the county attorney.

So inauspicious an event considerably depressed the mind of Harold Dentnoris; yet with a heart of pious resignation he endeavoured, by every means, to cheer the evident despondency of the Barrister.

Once again seated by that cottage hearth alone with his nephew, many weeks after the foregoing interruption to their sanguine schemes, Mr. Dentnoris commenced narrating the changes at the Rectory, and movements of all those whose occupations in this life held a charm for the spirit of the disappointed Harold.

"The most singular coincidence, during my brief stay at home," said the Rector, "was the sudden appearance of Ida Deschamps, now the Countess Estalles. I was musing in my arm-

chair, by the library fire, when who should follow the announcement of the latter name but the young lady herself."

"No!" ejaculated Harold.

"Yes, indeed; into the room she sailed, not with the overweeningly triumphant air of Ida Deschamps, but with the stateliness of grief; she wore a dress of thin muslin, malgré the piercing air of night, and looked almost ethereal, as, with a cold and haughty step, she beckoned me to a nearer approach.

"'Pray, do not allow me to trouble you,' said she, 'further than by imploring one night's lodging. My trespass may be extenuated by my tale of miserable sorrow. Lady Wilverton, I feared, would be absent, although she was not present at the affiancing of Miss Herberton. Permit me to seek hospitality from Waynard. I have nothing more to ask; to-morrow I shall pursue my way.'

"You can hardly conceive the confusion of my thoughts. With no attendant, on foot she

travelled, and in the garb of hottest summer. Perceiving her pallor increase, and frightened for the result, I instantly summoned old Waynard, bade her do all that was requisite for the comfort of my unexpected guest, and, turning again to Ida, asked if she had not better seek immediate repose."

"'When I have communicated all that remains to be told,' she replied, calmly.

"It appears that, notwithstanding her applications to Sir Brook Emmersly, he still determined to be present at the wedding of her former rival (Charlotte Herberton); Miss Deschamps vowed to marry Count Estalles if he did accept the invitation to the Grange. Not a week previously, poor Ida had discovered the Lothario's engagement to Gertrude Grey; they were sitting together at some dinner (I forget where), when Sir Brook remarked, how vexed he was that she did not admire Miss Grey; for, as for himself, he began to like her exceedingly. Thus, from one jealousy and another, she con-

cocted sufficient proof to nerve her resentful mind to a frenzy of hatred, sought her chamber so soon as the guests departed, and, coldly shaking hands with Sir Brook, hoped he would spend a pleasant day at the Grange.

"'The moment he was gone,' continued the agitated woman, 'I hastened to the door of Count Estalles' dormitory, forgot my womanhood in maddening revenge, acquainted him with my resolve to fly with him, that I hated life unshared by him, that Sir Brook was less than liked by me, whereas at that instant I loved him with the wildest intensity.' The enamoured Count eagerly met her suggestions, and the next morning, as the bridal veil fell over Lady Delvor's form, Estalles' bride, in the bonnet of a peasant, plighted her irrevocable vows. 'Yes,' added my visitor, emphatically, 'I left my father's home, and became the wife of a noble and excellent man—one whom I betrayed to dishonour. My husband quitted me at Dorton, to seek General Des-

champs, explain our marriage, and bring my maid and wardrobe, already prepared. Meanwhile, I dressed myself in the groom's livery, and, with my own hands, delivered a note to Miss Grey, even while she lay fainting on the couch, beside which Sir Brook had just knelt —a farewell billet Gertrude cannot easily forget. Nay, look not with horror at the relation, Mr. Dentnoris—better let her yet be saved the fruitless pangs I bear. Estalles returned—my father relented not, neither allowed my woman to join me. We continued on our cheerless journey, till illness overtook my companion, and rendered him wholly unfit to proceed; he became alarmed for my sake, and begged me to assent to his proposal, trusting that rest might enable him to pursue our travels on the morrow. Well,' said the speaker, 'at the loneliest hut in a wilderness we halted for two days; I watched him with unremitting care; our habitation contained but one small room, an old crone tenanted the corner of it,

and my husband, looking more dead than alive, occupied the centre, stretched on the thread-bare carpet and carriage cushions.

"The next morning the sun shone brightly as I opened my eyes from a restless sleep, and Estalles seemed to have slept also. I entreated him to attempt removing—the very sight of our glaring beldame maddened me. The Count assented, and I went forth with the hostess to seek the post-boy and groom; not a soul presented themselves. I called in vain, nor horses, carriage, nor postillion, remained; in a transport of indignation I rushed to Estalles—he too had vanished—I was alone! in that dark glade alone! Yet, after hysteric sobs and desperate alarm, weariness surprised me, and I slept again.'

"'It was hardly day break,' said poor Ida, calmly, 'when the features of that fearful hag gloamed upon me; the agony of that sight fiends might reveal—I find expression too faint to tell one sentence of its horror. Enough—I

shall soon conclude. This morning the postillion who had accompanied us to that grave of goodness, overtook me on my road back to Dorton; he challenged me, and I turned to learn his mission—this letter was all—all!'

" 'Ida, how I loved, adored you. Why, oh why have you thus dealt treacherously with him who, for your sake, set aside his notions of honour to please, to comfort you, to satisfy his momentary adoration; the idea of your father's refusal to my demand for an union, Ida, seemed too agonizing. I loved you, honourably, dearly—you have forsaken me. Vainly I wandered, fast as my feeble limbs would carry me, to strain my vision along the public road—Ida was gone—Ida had left me, ill, yet not unhappy—till thy form, my cruel wife, had wholly vanished. Sir Brook was passing, happily—to him I communicated my distress. In his carriage I sought my bride. Alas, adieu! Should these few words be

looked upon by eyes I valued as my life, then let thy soul hate me not, but pity and forget your husband,

"'PHILIP ESTALLES.'"

"'Have you read it?' inquired the Countess.

"I returned the note in silence—troubled thoughts entered my mind," said the Rector, as he received the written page from Harold, "and I could neither comfort nor speak to the victim. 'You will observe,' added she, 'that Sir Brook was on the spot to relieve my husband.' I was about to reply, when the poor girl exclaimed, 'Stay, I want no further counsel—I see my path more clearly than your discernment can—I will be avenged!' then, with a piercing shriek, fell upon the ground. Waynard at length got her to rest. I sent for Marianne, who is now tending her with gentle watchfulness—but see, morning peeps into your windows. Adieu—good night."

CHAPTER XVI.

——— Men's judgments are
A parcel of their fortunes; and things outward
Do draw the inward quality after them,
To suffer all alike.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

"IN two days more," said Harold, returning the Rector's morning salutation, "Lady Wilverton and the dear children will be here. The result of Dr. Slade's visit to London will disappoint my aunt. Amongst the arguments against my cause, is that of its not being impossible our party were the purloiners of the real certificates, in order to allow the opportunity for establishing our present claims."

"Yes, I am very anxious to hear more

upon the subject; he will accompany us, I think you said, to the Rectory to-day."

And to the Rectory our friends were proceeding, each engaged with similar communings on "the vacillating temper of Earth's Lady Fortune." Harold had wandered to the garden, thence to the hall, where a huge spider exhibited the fruit of his untiring industry. The Turk's* head weapon of destruction was immediately in demand, and a woman from a neighbouring cottage summoned to make a careful investigation throughout the rooms. The unconscious author of the commotion had just been forcibly ejected from his snug abiding-place, when Wilson exclaimed—

"Your pardon, Sir, but this is the same person who was busy here when you paid the first visit to this house, sir; perhaps, sir, she swept away those papers you were asking for! Some time ago it is, to be sure, sir, but no one else was in the room at the time. She was cleaning the windows when you and his re-

verence took her by surprise—and I remember how flustered the poor creature was when Dr. Slade bid her take away her horrible traps quickly."

"Yes!" answered Harold, "I do remember. Interrogate her instantly, Wilson, I desire you."

"Why, sure," said the old dame, "I was in such a fright at his worship, that I do not well know what I stuffed away into the old box as holds the cleaning articles, but I'll see, sir, immediately."

Harold followed her bustling steps, and there, amid whiting, sand-paper, and a thousand various messes, lay the identical packet. To reach his uncle, and chokingly relate the discovery, was the work of a second, although Mr. Dentnoris had buried himself in a labyrinth of budding shrubs.

Joy now reigned within the bosoms lately so burdened with their heavy hopelessness. No farther barrier to his rights remained, and

Harold already dreamed himself into the belief that Mary had consented to be his.

"Well, dear Lord," said Lady Wilverton, during a happy ride to the woods of Valence Hamlet, "I hope you will invite us to Landsworth directly you take possession—how I shall rejoice to see those lovely hills again."

"Nay! my own aunt Marianne, I beseech you not to speak thus until my rights are finally decided, and your prediction be verified concerning my elegibility to address Miss Clairlowe."

Lady Wilverton was silent. To cloud the opening brightness of Harold's prosperity seemed too cruel a task to assign herself: no, rather would she conceal her fears of Mary's constancy.

The speaking looks of the venerable Lady Loder—the accepted attentions of Mr. Percy, which were by many construed into undeniable evidences of a certain young lady's engagement, Aunt Marianne would not disturb

his tranquil day-dreams by relating; and she felt gratefully relieved when her nephew continued the conversation by a reference to her own affairs.

"Do not regret my having declined the alliance, Harold. Sir William Belton has accepted my terms of friendship, and believe me, when I assure you, that the idea of loving another with the fervency of a wife's devotion, can never be mine for other than the still loved form now mouldering in the vaults of Wilverton Church. Your uncle, however, will soon wed another, and be the happier for his proper selection; but here come the children—question Sarah about Charles Bacon; her blushing airs are beautiful."

As Sarah approached, Harold consequently inquired if she liked riding? had her friend Charles taught her to hold the reins so cleverly, and sit so square?

"Oh, Aunt Marianne, you told Harold—"

"Told me, what?"

"Oh, never mind; come, George, another canter," and the happy pair flew off like birds across the free and open plain.

"Of course my very reverend uncle espouses Mrs. Bacon?" observed Lord Dentnoris; "and how did you leave the Clairlowe's? At Loder Castle, I know—but were all well, and gay, and happy?"

"And, as usual!" retorted Lady Wilverton; "a little chagrined at your obstinate refusal, certainly."

'Did Mr. Percy answer your expectations? is he handsome?"

"No, not the least; his voice is singularly mellifluous, and, I think, constitutes his only charm; in other respects he is wanting in manliness; his appearance, on the whole, is effeminate to a degree. Poor Gertrude Grey, I fear, has well nigh finished her race in this world's precincts. Sir Brook has played her false a second time, and, I verily believe, Lodwick will challenge him yet; it is a horrible

thought, but coincides with a soldier's idea of satisfaction—when will such a barbarous custom be discontinued? Does it not seem inconsistent and fearfully wicked, Harold, that a heart made up of all that is charitable and benevolent, a heart that would shrink from the contemplation of murder, whose soul abhors the wrong done to the fading Gertrude, still feels no repugnance to the thought of inflicting the deepest, most irremediable wrong on a human being, a fellow creature! that of ushering him unprepared into the presence of a Judge whose verdict unchangeable — whose law as indestructible, as sure, dooms the fallen adversary to dark, unfathomable anguish, the pains of dread eternity?

"Or, on the other side, suppose himself, and not his adversary, should fall; is there a reward in Heaven for the breach of a commandment? and how shall the soul appear before its Maker, having quitted earth in the very act of offending the Most High? Think how

great the presumption for insignificant man to dare the vengeance of an Omnipotent power, by depriving of life the creature into whom our God had breathed it. Oh, Harold, my woman's argument may seem little worth to you, but from my trembling heart I feel such sorrow rise, when Lodwick speaks upon the subject, that lately I have dwelt long and solemnly over the demerits of so frightful a custom. It is not for us of mortal mould to decide whether or not a man deserves to die for an offence similar to that against poor Gertry—only when blood is spilled, when life is forcibly taken, does our Saviour permit the punishment?"

"Then, dear aunt, Gertry's case is in point; she is dying from his treachery."

"Maybe, indeed, she is thus decaying, Harold; but, at God's will, her grieved soul will depart, not according to Sir Brook's pleasure!"

"Pardon me, Aunt Marianne, I argued but

for the sake of hearing your reply; our opinions differ not on subjects of this nature. The accident causing my poor father's death taught me to ponder deeply on suicide, and sudden preparations for a future state."

"Yes, my Harold, and at the moment he was bidden to the judgment seat, his soul might have been filled with holy thoughts. God in his mercy seized the ripened fruit ere earthly toil had withered it again."

"Such! such it must have been! Ever thou art my comforter, dear aunt," said the nephew, looking into her earnest face with grateful and venerating fondness.

"How little I imagined," continued Lady Wilverton, "that my first favourite, Brook Emmersly, would have darkened the paths of so many young destinies, where either a warm heart or beautiful face was presented to his guile. He is now in the artillery, I think you said. Oh, yes! I recollect hearing of his appearing to a lady in a suit of black, so different a costume

to that his acquaintance had usually seen him wear, upon which she made her best courtesy, supposing him to be a new arrival, when the pealing laugh of her old acquaintance betrayed him. She describes him as supercilious to a degree, with a stately air of elegance, and a peculiar lighting of the countenance, that induces most people to pronounce him handsome; his impressive intonation is all I remember to be striking about him. Madame Estalles related many unfavourable instances of his treachery to our sex, and wondered at his talent for allaying the wrath of almost implacable enemies; surely she will never permit him into her presence again.

"Mary brought me a card that had once evidently been the property of Gertrude Grey, as I hurriedly attired myself to join Beverley and his unfortunate guest, intreating me to take charge of it; and if Gertrude, who was to be my companion, seemed to fear she had lost any part of her scraps, to drop it in her

room, so that she might imagine no eye save her own had seen it. Poor Mary, she is sadly afraid to mention the name to her cousin—fits and fainting are sure to succeed."

"What did the card possess to render it so valuable? May I not know."

"Only Brook's name effaced, and the following lines, which, though almost silly to a third person, plainly evince her mysterious devotion to him.

'If I could learn to love him less,
Because he taught me ill!
And sorrow and deep wretchedness,
I yet must love him still.'"

"Only think, dearest aunt, if at the end of this month I may in person risk my suit to Miss Clairlowe; offer to the proud Mary an unsullied name—a spotless escutcheon?"

"Harold, exult not yet," thought Lady Wilverton, as he lifted her from her horse; "how many hopes more near accomplish-

ment, how many joys half realized, have been in one dark moment blighted."

George Dentnoris met his brother in the hall, his face beaming with exultation, as he held forth a letter with its superscription in the hand-writing of the beautiful girl whose every look and tone was fresh upon our hero's heart, brightened by the hope now gilding the sweet memories.

"See, Aunt Marianne, such a long letter from Miss Clairlowe."

"But none for me?" asked Lady Wilverton. "No letter for me?"

"Oh, yes! a short one, though, compared to mine," said the happy boy, yielding to Harold the prize for perusal. It ran thus:—

"My dear George,

"We all leave Marchmont next week, just as the Spring's first beauties hold us closer to our native land. Yet I must not repine; it is believed that these proposed wanderings of

ours, if immediately begun, will assist to restore dear Gertry. I fear they will not—cannot have so happy a result. She would prefer remaining near your aunt, who, by this same post, will receive mamma's earnest invitation to make one of us. Gertry misses her society even now; indeed, Lady Wilverton's presence seems necessary to the poor sufferer's peace. How I wish you would come too. You may be vain, ad libitum, if I tell you I want to have you for my attaché. Has Sarah finished her rosary for Mrs. Bacon? Little pagan that she is, to compose a pendent of perfumed beads. Write me every particular about your party; who you visit, and who visits you; how many times your uncle walks abroad; how often you all ride. I had forgotten to say that Mr. Percy Loder goes with papa. We spend one month at Clarens, if the climate suits Gertrude. The Delvors are there — thence proceed we to Florence. Remember Mary Clairlowe to all your circle—to Sarah,

the dearest love—and all best wishes for yourself. Should Mr. Harold Dentnoris be with you, dear George, please make our compliments to him."

"Marchmont."

Lady Wilverton's acquiescence was conveyed by the next hour's post—how different emotions the one just passed had elicited. The dreaded truth appeared to be revealed by Mary's own confession! Harold read the confirmation of his fears. He saw—he felt—Percy had been accepted, and himself, the disinherited, forgotten, perchance despised. Ah! yes, thought he—Why should I have dreamed it possible, the admired and gifted Mary Clairlowe, the wealthy heiress of so many fortunes, should love a wretch, forlorn as I am—a gloomy type of man's unhappiness. Let it be—I am restored to rank, my name is of proud lineage—all I want I have, friends, home, and land—wealth, too, I have

more than doubly hers. She knows it not; she still retains, alone, the memory of a discarded Illegitimate! One who gratefully accepts a pittance for support—the maintenance none dare withhold. And for a spirit sordid as this shall I pine? Shall my heart yearn for sympathy from such an one? No! Mary Clairlowe, thine eye's blue gentleness was not mine own. Oh! vainly did I watch the purple shadows deepening into thought, and blessed my mournful gloominess for bringing me thy kind, thy blessed charity, thy once untainted, as beloved, consideration. Now all is changed—go and be glad—go wed with the much envied Percy. Would to Heaven I believed him fitted for the lord of thy proudly noble heart. With a sigh of desolate wilfulness, Harold turned from the characters on the white perfumed note. Oh! how sadly ungenerous the blind deity induces people to be sometimes, when absent hearts are full of love and profound recollections, each for each,

the sightless god forswears his own creations if the lover or the loved one be apart. Ah, yes! And vain must that one be, who firmly trusts to absent faith.

The day and hour approached when Lodwick must leave the quiet joys of home, its beloved circle,—more than all to him now, the wan girl, by whom and for whom he had watched and prayed; who had taught his soul to love, passionately and despairingly.

The shade of parting sorrow shrouded the laughing beam of his handsome face, as he carelessly trod the hall, entered a few months previously in almost boisterous happiness. Oh, change of heart! How singularly and painfully things, familiar things, objects loved of old, grow dark or light, as its influence comes over us! Yesterday the thunder-cloud of life's reality scarce dimmed the haunts we traversed, for then the adored one journeyed with us. To-day, the sun shines gaily on the self-same spot, yet dreariness and obscurity

are there; darkness encompasseth it, while dismal vacancy wastes the lone heart of thought, and sighs away its comforting communions. The eye rests not upon the form beloved, the ear hears not the peal of gladness. The heart of the mourner is desolate. Lodwick Clairlowe was an altered man: he loved in utter hopelessness; and the feeling once condemned by him as pusillanimous, now became his glory. He lived upon a phantom-dream, yet he was happy — if not happy, at least contented to love on, and paint the future with his own warm rainbow colours of vivid enthusiasm.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
SAVILL AND EDWARDS, PRINTERS
4, CHANDOS STREET.

GOALS AND GUERDONS:

OR,

THE CHRONICLES OF A LIFE.

VOL. II.

GOALS AND GUERDONS:

OR,

THE CHRONICLES OF A LIFE.

BY

A VERY OLD LADY.

"There's a divinity doth shape our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."
SHAKSPERE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
CHARLES OLLIER,
SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND.
1848.

GOALS AND GUERDONS:

OR,

THE CHRONICLES OF A LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

" Griefs of mine own lie heavy in my breast;
Which thou wilt propagate, to have it press'd
With more of thine: this love, that thou hast shown,
Doth add more grief to too much of my own."

SHAKSPEARE.

" He took her hand; a moment o'er his face
A tablet of unutterable thoughts
Was traced, and then it faded, as it came;
He dropp'd the hand he held, and with slow steps,
Retired."

THE DREAM.

WE must quit the scenes enacting at the Rectory and Marchmont, and return to a description of the visit to Loder Castle. A few

days subsequent to the arrival of the Clairlowe's, Percy Loder was closeted with his merry old mother, endeavouring almost vainly to make her understand the slight encouragement Miss Clairlowe gave to his addresses, adding, that Lord Delvor had intimated something about Mr. Dentnoris.

"And if," said the disappointed son, "Miss Clairlowe really admires that handsome fellow, small reason have I to think of ultimate success in winning the race."

"But, Percy, recollect, nothing would induce her father to permit his advances: fancy reading in the Morning Post, the marriage of Colonel Clairlowe's charming daughter, heiress of so-and-so, and so-and-so, and what else they know, to Harold Dentnoris, Esq., natural son and disinherited heir of Lord Dentnoris, &c. &c."

"No, no! they could not word it so unmanneredly."

"Hold, my dear child; I am aware that the

insertion after my supposed fashion, would be impossible, yet truth will out; besides, I do not credit her regard for him to such an extent. I was present the other morning when Lady Wilverton announced, that both the Rector and his nephew had business which precluded their coming here—I saw nothing particular in her manner."

The loquacious lady talked on, unable to interpret the silence of her inattentive listener. He had marked the effect of the above information on the quiet Mary. Percy Loder had a good and truthful heart, warped, it is true, by prejudice and old forms, yet his mind roamed free from the dissembling sophistry of the world—he rendered right to every man, and too soon acknowledged the influence of Miss Clairlowe's graceful mirth and continual good humour. Himself reserved and moody, her smiles subdued by the one thought she dared not reveal, her thousand attributes of pleasing enslaved him completely, much to the

satisfaction of the parent, who fondly wished her son's wife to be all that Mary Clairlowe was.

"Your meditations over, sweet sir, then maybe you can afford to answer yea or nay to my proposal."

"Say on, my mother."

"Well, now, since you cannot, I will discover how your hopes may or may not be supported in that quarter."

"How? not surely by questioning her?"

"No, no, leave me alone—I understand." And away trotted the busy old lady in immediate search of the object of their conversation, and having made the circuit of the conservatories, found her intended companion to Alverton leisurely overlooking a bed of spring violets.

"Will you take a seat in my carriage, Miss Clairlowe? I want a companion—some one who can devote two hours to charity, and an old woman!"

"Willingly; but upon what mission are we going?" inquired Mary. "And may I go as I am?"

"Just as you are," replied Lady Loder. "I am going to witness the children's annual dinner at the Lodge, and nothing can be prettier than that coquettish-looking straw affair upon your head at this moment. So off let us be."

"It is an unfair advantage I am about to take with this young girl," thought Lady Loder, as she followed her glancing step into the carriage, "but for my son's sake I will hazard it;" while poor Mary felt glad as the horses set off, whirling her from the insipid society of that very son: and, despite her firm resolve, there was something in the parting scene between Miss Clairlowe and Percy which nearly drove the officious mother from her purpose, forcing her reluctantly to adopt the fears she till then believed impossible to be entertained.

"Mary, do you think my dear boy as handsome as Harold Dentnoris?" said she, suddenly addressing her young friend.

"No," was nearly responded, but the lips, though still silent, had told the truth, and again Lady Loder's heart misgave her.

"There is no similarity in their appearance," replied Mary, sorry for the near completion of the unguarded negative. "Your son is much younger, too, than Harold—Mr. Harold Dentnoris," she added, blushing at the familiar appellation she had heard herself pronounce.

"Younger, I confess; but do you, my love, like Harold—Mr. Harold Dentnoris," said the quaint old lady, imitating Miss Clairlowe's embarrassment. "Delvor told me many tales of Venice, its commerce, population, and in fact the occupation of some strangers there—parties at the English ambassador's, &c."

"If he related anything of our movements, it could not have been very entertaining or

instructive. We passed a tedious two months there," observed Mary.

"Yet one memory, my little sophist, must have left the scent of its flowers upon your heart."

"What memory, dear lady?"

"Come now, Mary Clairlowe, I will frankly avow the object of these questions. I wish to find out something necessary to the peace of my son."

"I know not what discovery you wish to make, my dear lady; but of course it is the greatest nonsense in the world."

"No, dear Mary, not the greatest nonsense—let us be ingenuous to one another."

"But what concerning? Nothing connected with Venice can possibly interest your son!"

"It does though, Mary; and concerns Harold Dentnoris."

Miss Clairlowe's brow suffused. An angry expression flitted over her countenance. She

could not reply. Yet what cause for so unequivocal an agitation?

"My son—my poor boy, already loves you, Mary," added the mother, taking advantage of her victim's silence; "while I and his father heartily approve his choice."

Mary trembled. She had read determination in the mild eye of Percy Loder. She had thoughtlessly elicited little services from his effeminate disposition—she had received his many praises smilingly, perhaps indifferently—for "love" and "him" seemed wholly incompatible. Another was in that heart—its sole, lone occupant.

"Dear Lady Loder," said she, after recovering from the sudden surprise; "I have known Mr. Percy but seven short days, counting from the moment of our meeting, and if we both loved to distraction, the feeling would be as evanescent as first-sight love generally is. He and I could cure ourselves, I think, without the loss of anything, save a sigh or two."

"Mary, you do not speak like yourself. My son loves you. You love Harold Dentnoris."

It was too much. Miss Clairlowe felt really indignant, and raising her head proudly, coldly replied—"Lady Loder, I am not at liberty to answer for your son, it is true. Nor am I vain enough to imagine I can have secured his kindliness on so short an acquaintance—sufficient for me to hope he does *not* love me. I have nothing to offer in exchange."

"I have offended you, my dear Mary. Pity your old friend if I have taken an injudicious method of settling all my best hopes—of crushing a mother's sincere desire."

The warm-hearted girl felt reproved. Acquainted with the character of Lady Loder—aware of her overweening love for her only child, although conscious of the impropriety of the catechist's mode of acquiring a sure proof how far his hopes might be established, Miss Clairlowe acknowledged to her own conscience that other than the chilling sentence just

uttered, might have tranquillized the old lady, and answered her own purpose. Hastening, therefore, to rectify her error, she turned one of her irresistibly enchanting smiles to her companion, and gently kissing the wrinkled forehead, begged to be forgiven, that as yet her heart had been unwon. "And I firmly believe," she continued, "I shall be reckoned among the stiffest old maidens of my day."

"A probable result to be achieved by the blueness of your pretty eyes, my love," responded her friend; "but you will never care for my poor boy, I can see," and the heavy teardrop verified the fervent ejaculation.

"Lady, dear Lady Loder, to say I shall not care for anything that belongs to you, would falsify my affectionate regard."

"Say, then, will you try to think of Percy kindly, dearly if possible? Tell me, Mary, will you or will you not? Tell me, as you best determine. I see, I see you hate him. Poor Percy!"

"Hate him, dear lady. Nay, for your sake I could not."

"And will you let me tell him thus—that you think more of him than the rival he fears to compete with?"

"No more than for Lodwick, I never can," answered Mary.

"And my boy's heart so wholly yours?"

"His love has, indeed, been quickly won, dear lady."

"Mary, I have done. I plead no more for him, yet I ask you (since you esteem me your friend) who it is you do love? It is an impertinent question, I confess.

"It is Harold Dentnoris; and believe an honest old woman when she tells you, Mary, that we all hope it may not be so; you have your pride of birth, and so have we; forgive a vexed mother—better that you wedded my son than the handsome Harold, the Illegitimate."

"Lady Loder—I will not, may not, listen to your suspicions, but merely assure you that

Mr. Dentnoris has not even paid me the compliments of common attention; on the contrary, he avoids Gertrude and myself."

"I expect Gertrude has very little to do with the matter," observed Lady Loder, in a subdued accent. "You may trust me, Mary; I am a rude old woman; do not rest your hopes on young Dentnoris—he is engaged elsewhere."

"Elsewhere!" exclaimed Miss Clairlowe, completely surprised.

"Nay, I hardly know; but do not love him, Mary."

"Lady Loder, we will cease; this discussion is not well, it is painful."

The irritated old lady was silent, as the carriage door flew open, and, notwithstanding Miss Clairlowe's cold reception of her wishes, she flattered herself pretty considerably that no marriage ever could take place between Harold Dentnoris and the daughter of Colonel Clairlowe.

When the agitated girl returned once more

to the quiet of her own room, how much she longed for her cousin's soft voice, to yield courage and comfort to her wounded mind. Lady Loder, it is true, had sought and received unconditional forgiveness, still the memory sat upon her spirits like a warning nightmare. The idea, too, that Gertry's musings ought not to be interrupted by silly tales of worldly passion, while all her own particular thoughts dwelt only on eternity, calmed the yearning, and bade our gentle heroine resolve to think no more about it.

The dinner-bell at length summoned her again to the crowd, as she sighed forth the sum of all her present heaviness! Gertrude evidently dying, or soon to die—Lodwick leaving home for active service—herself! ah, yes! and Mary confessed it felt not the lightest of her grievings, quitting England without the chance of an interview with one on whom her tears and joy so utterly depended for diminution or enhancement.

On entering the drawing-room, Miss Clairlowe felt the discomforting assurance that the son of a proud old man had been rejected by her, even to his mother; that reasons, the least complimentary in the world's opinion, would be ascribed to her decision; then the worst fear, her conscience acknowledged, was that the babbling, though kind old lady, might reveal to Lady Wilverton, or her own mother, the suspicion of her devotion to the disinherited.

She knew not that Lady Loder had bidden her son to hope on, and that this feeling dictated the frank kindness which tended considerably to remove the more unpleasing impressions from her oppressed mind. Had she overheard the report given by her friend to Percy Loder, concerning the result of their painful conference, Mary would have repelled his attentions, rather than have looked so beautifully grateful for the gentle manner in which he received her rejection of his suit.

Far otherwise was it with the admirer; his

mother saw the impassable gulf between Harold Dentnoris and Mary Clairlowe, and strengthened his love with hope to bear away the prize.

Lady Loder knew not, understood not, woman's well tried love, its might upon the heart, or its depth within the temple of the soul.

The hour had actually arrived! Lodwick was prepared to leave Marchmont; yet, thought he, do I go unblessed by one parting pledge from Gertrude Grey.

With anxious haste he despatched a request to be admitted to the boudoir of his cousin.

Gertrude, seated as usual on her softly pillowed chair, welcomed him cheerfully; around her lay many a relic of Lodwick's affection; he entered, the door closed, and the young soldier knelt before his earthly deity—to rise again unrewarded as ever.

"Lodwick!" said the invalid, in the calm cold tones she had lately assumed towards him.

"Oh, speak not like dropping ice, my pre-

cious, precious love, or you will kill me; you know not how you sting my brain, and drive almost its tenderness away, by your miserable care to seem more than marble to me, Gertrude."

"Lodwick, I am dying! I have loved you always as I love you now."

The warm heart of her lover thrilled! falsely deeming that the earnestness of his words had overcome her fixed frigidity; and, carrying the long white fingers to his lips, kissed them in rapturous gladness.

"Lodwick!" repeated the low voice of Gertrude, "as a brother I love you; you mistake me," added she, marking his look of irresolute disappointment; "I want you to tell me when you are likely to return—if in time for us to meet again on earth!"

"On earth! meet again, Gertrude?"

"Even so, Lodwick; I fear our next meeting cannot be at Marchmont; my doom, or—no—my peace, my joy! will soon be yonder,"

said she, pointing to the sky, which then beamed through the trees in glorious blue.

"Kill me! kill me, Gertrude! Oh, how I have loved, adored, aye, worshipped you; whilst you, oh Gertrude, you drag me to the poisonous goal, and then tranquilly survey its rank certainty; and I, poor fool, treasure each weed of memory, each gentle look, with feverish fondness! But say, Gertrude," continued Lodwick, turning calmly towards her, "if I return more worthy of you—if honour and renown be mine—wealth, you know, already is —but if to this I can add glory! will your high spirit look upon me then?"

"Lodwick, we shall meet again—I know it. Yes, upon this earth! wan and drooping as you see me now."

"Stay, stay, Gertrude! I cannot bear the idea of your fading life."

"Yet let me speak, dear Lody," rejoined his cousin, in the accents of their younger days.

"Repeat not those tones of kindness, Ger-

trude—they drive me mad; it is not in your power to pity me."

"Lodwick, listen," said the feeble girl; "the world may smile upon you—the praises of woman be yours. Your trophies may be blazoned by unprecedented triumphs; ay, Lodwick, your mind, filled to surfeiting, may revel in a labyrinth of ambitious designs—deeds achieved and deeds premeditated—yet, by all I suffer, by the love still sacred in my breast, by my prayers, my tears, a cousin's unfathomable interest for your future weal,—I implore no more than blessings, supplicated from Heaven's throne, for you, dear Lodwick. I cannot be his—I will not be another's."

"Gertrude, had you this regard for me, you could not gall me thus!"

"Such love as angels bear you, Lody—such love take from your poor cousin. It is my truthful affection, Lodwick, that adjures you to restrain the wishes I cannot share. Remember, once I pledged my troth to one!

How unworthy he has proved himself, they tell me, Lodwick. Can you, then, believe, that, notwithstanding his derision and neglect, whole worlds of lovers could break the bond, or loose the golden chord that fastens round my heart, and binds me to that faith. Oh! heed me, when I say, that your untried disposition, dear Lody, hath peril yet before it. Let not human worship for the great, or beautiful, displace the Christian's first and holiest adoration."

"Gertrude Grey!" exclaimed Lodwick indignantly, "I feel your crushing coldness. May God bless you!" And in another few moments the wretched Lodwick was far beyond the neighbourhood of Marchmont.

CHAPTER II.

Alas, for the bright promise of our youth!
How soon the golden chords of hope are broken—
How soon we find that dreams we trusted most
Are very shadows!

HAROLD DENTNORIS attended Lady Wilverton to the home whence its heir had just departed, while Mary Clairlowe still lingered at the window, watching the last glimpse of her brother's form.

They had been unexpectedly summoned from Loder Castle; and since their return no perceptible improvement had taken place in Miss Grey's health; it became, therefore, a matter of urgent necessity for them to quit England immediately.

A carriage at length interrupted her meditations; and, all roseate with the hope of meeting her constant dream once more, she turned with a buoyant step to welcome the arrivals.

Scarcely daring a look at the opening door, her ear waited to catch the sound of a long estranged voice.

Harold, however, had departed, and Mary felt that—he was gone.

The despairing youth had simply left his aunt, grasped the friendly hand of the Colonel, caught one glance of the happier Percy—and vanished.

For the first time Mary's heart deceived her; in its struggle for repose and pre-occupation with her brother's sorrow, she vainly anticipated tranquillity for her own bosom.

Her mother and Gertrude observed her alternating colour—the pale cheek, the listless dropping of the arms—and guessed too well the cause.

Mrs. Clairlowe congratulated herself that

change of scene would remove the image of the fascinating Harold; Gertrude sighed; and Lady Wilverton followed with her eyes the unhappy girl, who moved silently from the withdrawing-room.

Is this the heroism of which she thought herself capable—tears, floods of tears, bursting sighs, and spiritless despair? Alas for woman's tenderness—

To see the once so clear blue orb
Its summer light and warmth forget—
Darkening beneath its tearful lid,
Like a rain-beaten violet.

"Is this thy fate, sweet Mary," thought the wondering Percy—"No! I woo thee no more; my mother's kindness has deceived me!"

No one whispered a reference to her sorrow; no one seemed to heed her misery, despite the universal sympathy so tacitly awarded by every member of that circle.

And Mary sealed anew the gushing fountain of her momentarily unlocked feelings.

Harold's last visit had convinced her how

little he cared for her; and in the sad hour's communion, she trembled to remember how nearly her lone secret had been extorted.

"Ah, yes!" murmured Mary, "the handsome rich Percy in our train is well—'tis better that it should be so. I will school my spirits—come, excellent dissemblance, aid my poor heart in this bitterness!" Then, calming her mind, with a bent knee, she wept in contrite sadness, to think how wilfully she had questioned the ordinances of the Most High—"If it be His will to try me, why should I repine?" and Mary Clairlowe rose healthfully comforted.

Then the hope that Harold yet might recollect the looks of intense inquiry he had so frequently bent on her, stole into the wily recesses of memory, and gave to her step and tone the lightness it had lost. Mary had not prayed in the brief moments of her kneeling posture; her mind was merely seeking a hallowed influence over the thoughts within it—

she wished to free herself from the engrossing devotion to the only being who had intuitively wakened her to love thoroughly and unvaryingly; she felt more assured in her Maker's presence in her kneeling posture—He saw and comforted her.

Another month, and our friends were all dispersed! Mr. Slade continued in London, having encountered serious opposition from the deposed Lord Dentnoris. June arrived, and with it a kind repetition of the invitation from Loder Castle for Harold, his sister, and brother, notwithstanding the absence of Mr. Loder.

Upon entering the park gates, Harold and his companions were surprised to hear their names distinctly pronounced, followed by an invitation to join the ladies. A pretty Miss Belton supported the arm of Lady Loder, to whom the newly arrived party were speedily introduced; but one of George's letters to Miss Clairlowe will better describe the un-

deviating monotony of their amusements during the first week:—

"This is a most stupid place, my dear Miss Clairlowe, without you; however, I do think Harold is at last in love,—and I am sixteen; why I think he is really in love, is for this reason: they say people are very quiet, and absent, and care for nobody else when that is the case. I hope Miss Grey continues to get better. Sarah and I both were so glad to hear she had walked across the room twice. I only know if Charles Bacon had been present, he would not have admired the screech Sarah gave when I read that part of your letter. 'Ah!' she screamed, 'I know she will come back to us soon, and well. Oh! how happy it will make me; tell her so, Georgy, when you write.' Tell Mr. Loder, too, please, that I have had 'Leopold' confined. You would have laughed at an incident the other day, when we all went to look at the dog.

Miss Belton, of whom I have told you before, dropped her handkerchief; Harold quietly picked it up, and put it into his pocket. I was going to tell him of the mistake, when Lady Loder said, 'No! no! my dear, don't interfere.' Well, I did not; but a very little while afterwards, Sir William came back on your beautiful horse, that Mr. Percy keeps for you. Well! I hardly know how to describe it, because you cannot see kind, fussy Lady Loder, open her eyes and say, 'Fie, Mr. Dentnoris!' nor Miss Mary Anne Belton blush, a thing she does not often take the trouble of doing. Sarah and I were sorry at first, but from laughter we were soon reduced to gravity, by the affronted young lady snatching away the pocket-handkerchief from my brother. I never saw her move so agilely before. Harold had wiped the foam from the bridle and knees of his horse with it, and was in the act of throwing it to the groom, when Miss Belton discovered it. He was very much annoyed, and asked how

he came by the handkerchief at all? but he is always so dreadfully forgetful now, and so low spirited. I shall be glad when we return to Norton Valence; we have great news for you, but I must not tell it; indeed, the uncertainty about Harold's success, even still, makes me afraid to tell it before it happens."

* * * *

G. DENTNORIS."

When it seemed impossible any more opposition could take place, Mr. Beverley Dentnoris had communicated the glad tidings of Harold's restored title, &c., to his younger charges. Subsequently, however, obstacles and impediments had arisen of a novel and serious nature, frustrating even Mr. Slade's clever perseverance; and the discomfited heir was once again subjected to the fluctuating hopes connected therewith.

Mary Anne Belton was a pretty blonde, apathetic, amiable, and very willing to obey any orders, without a dissentient thought.

She was desired to be constantly with Harold; while he, whose memory was absorbed by the clever, animated, joyous Mary, felt no other emotion in the society of his harmless companion, than that she seldom disturbed his musings by conversation,—in fact, she was precisely the person he would have selected, since some one must be thrown to his lot. Every when, and almost everywhere, therefore, Harold and Mary Anne Belton were inseparable; at the harp, in song, at work,—indeed at all seasons, save at her toilet, to which, if Lady Loder had requested his admission, the gentle spinster would have desired her equally apathetic abigail to request his presence. Yet I much question whether the unfeminine notion would not have roused Harold Dentnoris from his lethargic habits.

As for the god Cupid, he never thought it worth while to squander his arrows on such unprofitable game. Miss Belton would have wondered, and gently extracted the ruffling

weapon, and slept away its sting by the very next morning.

Miss Clairlowe passed the letter to her father, who, with the rest of the breakfast party, had been mutely watching the transient suffusions on the lovely reader's face.

"Why, Lady Wilverton!" cried the merry Colonel, "your nephew is in love at last."

"In love, Colonel Clairlowe?"

"Ay! yes, in love! Its odd, very odd, though, it should be with Mary Anne Belton. Why, she can't say 'Boh to a goose.' How, in the name of Egypt's kings, did she manage to fascinate such a clever fellow as Harold Dentnoris? He is the finest fellow I ever saw. What the devil does he marry her for?"

"Is he really to be married—and shortly?" asked Gertrude. "But, Mary, may not I read the letter?"

Her cousin had left the room, yet breakfast had scarce begun.

"I am as likely to proffer my services for

a Lady Abbess's appointment, or you for a Friar's, my dear sir," observed Lady Wilverton. Yet she, as well as others, interpreted the change alluded to in George's communication into the marriage about to take place.

Lady Wilverton was not acquainted with the fact of the Rector's having made known the recognition of Harold's title to the children. She would most certainly have condemned his trusting the information until every path to litigation had been closed; so that the idea of the concluding paragraph's bearing reference to that subject never occurred to her.

"Why shouldn't he wed who he likes?" said the Colonel, provokingly.

"Why should he not, my dear sir? I know the accused," rejoined Lady Wilverton, good humouredly; "but I will go and see what ails Mary."

The sympathising Marianne Wilverton well knew the cause of her retirement from the table, and sighed to think of the darkened

aspect to Harold's "future," if the blushes of Mary Clairlowe were insincere. At times it was impossible not to believe her engagement to Mr. Loder. At others, the sound of Harold's name called forth the sigh, hushed in its breathing-passage from the heart, and half consoled Aunt Marianne.

"Mary," said she, bending over her, as the troubled girl sat listlessly gazing from the casement over the broad, clear waters beneath. "Mary, love, what are you thinking of? and what book is this in your hand, but none of its contents in your little head, I am sure?"

"Oh! Lady Wilverton! my head aches; I am dispirited, and begged from mamma to be excused."

"Dear Mary! is there no other Childe Harold of whom you would know something, besides the hero of this volume?"

"Lady Wilverton—I know—at least—"

"Never mind, my dear Mary, what you know; do not raise your eyes, if you wish not

to look upon one who sees your warm heart plainer than you conceive, my dear girl; at all events, I hope I do. And I tell you, Mary, that other hearts are faithful, too."

Mary Clairlowe raised her eyes, but Lady Wilverton had quitted the apartment.

The conviction of her imprudent revelation pained, yet gratified the aunt; she felt that now or never was the moment to save her nephew from despair; and cost what it might—provided she infringed not on what was just or right—Lady Wilverton felt determined to impart at least an intimation of Harold's unswerving attachment.

Miss Clairlowe quickly recovered her composure; there was something in her kind friend's announcement that chased the demon from her fancy, and bade her still steal from recollection courage to support her through the approaching ordeal.

"I have a letter also," said Mr. Loder, meeting the object of his ambitious love; "it is

from my mother." The billet was passively accepted, with a coldly uttered—"yes, thank you." Percy could no longer endure this distant manner, but, bursting into womanlike tears, exclaimed, "I leave you, Miss Clairlowe, to-night—my mother, you perceive, requires my presence and assistance, to nurse a rival—a man I like too well to hate—and now can scarcely envy. Ah, Mary Clairlowe, look kindly into these poor eyes once more, pour comfort into my soul through them, and then farewell to all my prayers. Mary, dear Mary—my first, my last love—the first and only moment I have ever thus addressed you, forgive me—thoughts must have vent to-day. My diminutive form, my effeminate pallor, you taught me by your kindness to forget; I am punished; the goal I aimed at is not won, but certain and sincere will be my everlasting petitions for you both. Rely on my care for Mr. Dentnoris. Mary, he shall be cherished like gemmed gold for your dear sake."

"Mr. Loder, I beseech you not to detain me longer; I assure you it is only the friendliness of years I feel for Mr. Dentnoris; I could not bear to tell *him* even this."

"Miss Clairlowe, time and opportunity have wrenched your secret from you—not from your lips, but from your actions—stay, I intreat you; let me say, that none save a disappointed man could dare to tell you thus much. I sought your love, and would have given up every other thing to win, to—— blessed thought—to keep it. It is over! not my love—that must die away in wasted spirits, and humbled thought—I will see to that. Assure me that you perfectly understand my feelings, and guard my secret. I am a very woman in my jealousy of ridicule, and here I confess what shall henceforth die with me. Farewell.—Yet stay," he cried, forcing a change of theme; "can you allow Wilson, or Johnson, to rectify this ugly purse?"

"Oh, yes; but it is indeed too old," answered his agitated listener.

"Whence can I obtain its substitute, Mademoiselle?"

"I will find you a better," said Mary, glad that the interview had terminated with nothing further for her to speak regarding the overpowering theme. She drove away her burthening thoughts, however, and hastened to bring her own purse for Mr. Loder's use.

"It is my best, and made by dear mamma," said Mary, "so prize it for her workmanship, at least as much as being my gift."

Percy took the hand which held it, and pressing both to his lips, replied, "And this gift, Miss Clairlowe, seals more than a lover's faith to you. I labour on without a guerdon in prospect; my goal, that Heaven above us. May I add one word?"

"Say on; but I implore you, do not renew the subject of love, my good Mr. Loder."

"It is of love that I would speak, Miss Clairlowe—of regard, unassociated with my own vain

hopes—it is of your consideration for another—the road is dangerous to both—Miss Clairlowe cannot marry *him!*"

"Mr. Loder! again I say I would not—but this is not for me to determine; I know him so little that——"

"Fie, Miss Clairlowe—treat me less insincerely; you know his character, his worth, his high aspirings, aye, his devotion."

"Indeed, yes; and since he will marry Miss Belton, I am glad of it."

"No, you are not, though. Miss Clairlowe could scarcely speak an untruth—our false minds portray a thousand things in lights and shades at times, and you, ere to-morrow week, shall hear of the truthfulness or falsehood of the report. Your heart shall be tranquillized by your rejected, yet earnest friend, Percy Loder. Oh! my mother, how thy heart will mourn for despair. Adieu! adieu! Miss Clairlowe."

That night Lady Wilverton and Mr. Loder

left Florence for England; Harold had been taken alarmingly ill, and symptoms of brain fever had begun to show themselves.

Mary Anne Belton was his only nurse—nor would he take anything from other hands during his delirium.

On Percy he continually pronounced solemn benedictions, till at length the kind old mother resolved to hasten her son's return; the mandate was obeyed, and not many hours after the decrease to their party, Colonel and Mrs. Clairlowe also decided on returning to dear England, greatly to the satisfaction of the young ladies; Gertrude having wonderfully revived, and no one supposing that the flickering beams of apparent strength were but the precursors of prostration, more severe with each returning day.

At Paris the pale girl's health again rapidly changed, and a halt was proposed by her good uncle: the physician in their suite pronouncing it impossible to continue the journey

until several days' entire rest had been obtained.

In the gay metropolis of France, nothing was heard of more than the enchantment attending the sayings and doings of the beautiful Countess Estalles, and the exquisite Englishman in her train. At the same time it was reported that the Count, her husband, had fled to America to avoid the intrusions of dunning creditors, his charming wife being considered an all-sufficient recompence for her lord's misdeeds. At the embassy the brilliant woman reigned exclusively supreme among her distinguished compatriots.

Mary and her mother were now completely occupied by the dying Gertrude, whose passport to the realms of Heaven appeared so near.

"Can we not leave earlier than Mr. Torrens implies?" asked the sufferer; "it would be gladness to die in my father's country, since I have quitted my mother's land, dear aunt. See, there is nothing in the sky or on

the earth to speak of death, but my own wan face, and in this giddy town I feel unmeet to go direct to the great judgment seat."

"When you like, my treasure, you shall go on," said the Colonel—"whenever my poor Gertry feels strong enough."

"Now, then, this very day?"

"Alas, the time will not permit it; suppose we fix on the day after to-morrow, and I will summon Dentnoris and Lady Wilverton to meet us at Boulogne, if Harold is better, my dear, shall I?" asked the warm-hearted soldier.

"Thank you, thank you!" breathed the exhausted invalid, and sank on her pillow in sleep.

"Here is a note of inquiry from 'La Belle Anglaise,'" said Colonel Clairlowe—"it is like her impertinence. Say 'my compliments.'"

"Nothing more, sir?"

"Nothing more."

Dear old man, he little knew the resentful temper of the woman he affronted, nor sus-

pected it possible that for his offence she would embitter the last few moments of his beloved niece's sojourn in the neighbourhood.

Miss Clairlowe had passed each day in reading or conversing with her cousin; and often the early memories of their youth were reverted to, and each sad retrospect carefully omitted from the rosary their fancies threaded, stealing from the past its flowers, imploring from the "to come" its own pure heavenly guerdons.

The next morning was unusually resplendent, and all Paris seemed to be in Sunday dress, as the bells of the numerous churches pealed through the streets.

Gertrude intreated them to leave her in Johnson's charge, and attend the chiming of the Sabbath call. She begged so earnestly that they would seek the public worship of their God, it was impossible to reject her pleading voice; consequently, though not without a strong desire to stay, and many a sigh at doing her bidding, the good Colonel led off

his wife and child to the pretty Protestant church ——.

"Bring the large Bible and read it to me, Johnson," said Miss Grey. A scream succeeded to the wish—Brook Emmersly knelt before her. Gertrude fainted; kindly, and with gentleness, he bore her through the hall, and again pressed to his bosom the form once so fondly loved. Sir Brook had watched the hotel containing his victim for many days, hoping to find some moment when Gertrude might be approached alone. The Countess entertained suspicions concerning these pedestrianisms of her sworn attaché; and she it was who stood before the two—Gertrude inanimate! Brook haughty and composed to herself! tender and yearning to his lost neglected love.

Ida noted this tenderness.

"Brook Emmersly, I will be revenged!" ejaculated the wild devoted woman; and, tearing her glove from her hand, seized a pen and paper, wrote a few words, and fled.

"Your revenge, my bright-eyed Countess!" sarcastically muttered the cruel man; "your revenge! ha! ha! Gertrude, are you better?" asked Sir Brook, pressing the cold hand. "Hath my presence tortured you, my love? Hath Gertrude Grey forgotten me?"

"No, Sir Brook! no! I have not," whispered the reviving girl; "but, Johnson, why have you admitted any one?"

"She merely allowed me to see you, in pity to my intreaties," replied the betrayer.

"Oh, Sir Brook, why do you thus belie the truth? why run your present course of folly, and, perchance, of vice? I look upon you, and forget your treason."

"My treason, most beautiful?"

"Nay, Sir Brook, I am near to death—my fleeting hours are numbered. Hear me; leave poor Ida; she loves you dearly, it is told, and you—you treat her cruelly. She is wedded, too, and yet resents your care for others. I have no jealousies. Do not look

suspiciously on a dying girl. I pray you, leave me now. Thank you for remembering poor Gertrude Grey. Pray, leave me; my uncle must not meet you here."

"May I see you once again in his presence, Gertrude?" inquired the perfidious lover.

"Never!" she replied, mournfully. It was her last effort; the lids drooped heavily. Sir Brook felt really agitated; he feared to be alone with death, for nothing less could possibly have thus wholly overpowered the lifeless form within his arms. Laying her again on the couch from whence she had risen, he waited in agonized impatience for the doctor's arrival; and the moment Johnson entered, accompanied by Mr. Torrens, hurriedly withdrew.

Imagine the dismay of our party on seeking their cherished sufferer. The maid's excuses were but just begun, when a note from the unwelcome visitant was put into Colonel Clairlowe's hand, its contents as follows:—

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I have this instant left your hotel. It was not my intention to intrude on your family while your niece continued so alarmingly ill; and, therefore, I purposely refrained from permitting myself the pleasure of visiting you; but understanding that the Countess Estalles meditated a few moments' conversation with Miss Grey, on the first opportunity of her being left alone, and seeing all depart for church service, I hastened to the Rue ——, in order, if possible, to prevent the admission of Madame Estalles. You can conceive my horror when a loud scream greeted me; I almost forced a passage into the room where Miss Grey's inanimate form lay, requested the intruder to absent herself, sent for your physician, and withdrew. I must apologise for troubling you with this; but really, dear sir, my oppressive anxiety to hear of the beautiful sufferer overcomes every other consideration, and in haste do I herein beseech you, to ren-

der me eternally grateful, by despatching a line assuring me she is better.

"Your most obliged,

"B. E."

There was a feeling in the kind old Colonel's heart, demanding belief for these written sentiments—thankfulness to all who cared for his fading favourite.

An immediate reply was consequently vouchsafed.

"And now, love," said Mrs. Clairlowe to her husband, "we must rise with the lark to-morrow."

"Yes, yes; and if, dear Gertry, you hear my morning song of pleasure at the prospect of leaving Paris, do not mistake it for chanticleer's."

The patient cousin smiled a feeble smile; yet even that was recompence to Mary.

CHAPTER III.

No night so dark and sad
  But hath its gleam of light;
No soul so cold or bad
  But hath its touch of right.

ANON.

Partout on trouve en son chemin
  La peine attachée à la vie;
Mais on ne sent le vrai chagrin
  Qu'en souffrant loin de sa patrie!

LE CAPTIF.

MR. Harold Dentnoris made his first appearance in the drawing-room at Loder Castle on the evening the beautiful Lady Delvor paid her passing visit. Neither Percy nor Harold had seen her for many years; and each

seemed equally attracted by her transcendant beauty.

"She is indeed remarkably handsome," thought Harold, "beyond any degree of loveliness I ever witnessed—those flashing eyes and deep full gaze, thank Heaven, Mary Clairlowe hath not. Oh for one look, my Mary, into those dove-like orbs of gentleness. Yet, fool that I am, her betrothed now stands to chide my heart's fidelity. If sin it really be to love thee, dear Miss Clairlowe, that culpability ever must be mine."

The imagination of the bride soon formed her plan of conquest. Harold had impressed her vanity with golden hopes of a flirtation, by his ardent look of undisguised astonishment at her loveliness. She knew not that even then, possessing her exclusive attention, as she ministered to his passion for music, and then in almost equal harmony spoke of the invalid party—those kindred spirits tending the dying hours of Gertrude Grey—Lady Delvor ima-

gined not how his soul then wandered to his first, last, and only thought connected with passionate devotion—intense love.

The next morning on the breakfast table were several letters waiting the guests expected; among them one addressed to "Lord Dentnoris, late Harold Dentnoris, Esq.," conspicuous for its lawyer-like envelope and parchment speaking penmanship. The compassionate old lord hesitated to send such a quiz upon his fortunes to the invalid; Lady Wilverton, however, to the surprise of all present, undertook the task most gladly, anticipating news (which did not disappoint her), instead of a dun, according to Percy's interpretation of the mysterious inclosure.

"May I send this to Mary Clairlowe?" exclaimed Lady Wilverton, holding the huge letter towards her nephew.

"To whom?" said he.

"To Colonel Clairlowe, and Gertrude," said Aunt Marianne, laughing.

"Not till they arrive at Marchmont, dear Marchmont," replied the heir. "Yet if you will communicate it to the Loders, I shall be glad. You see that the transfer of the twelve thousand pounds has induced the old man to relinquish his unlawful claims — that last sentence is worth all. Clever fellow Mr. Slade, to make him confess and sign the important statement."

"I go to do my lord's bidding, Harold. May God bless you for the patient fortitude thus long sustaining you. You know we quit the Castle to-day. I will be ready to attend your summons."

The intelligence confirmed Percy Loder's despair. Lady Loder herself felt vanquished in her still existent hope; the generous lord alone exulting unrestrainedly in the fortune of his admired young friend.

"Harold," said he, grasping his hand, "your history is complete. Mary now will learn to love."

The half whispered tones in which the fervent thought was uttered, the smile on Marianne Wilverton's face as her quick ear caught the sound of a dear name, staggered poor Harold. He knew no reply to offer—he felt that Mary and wealth still, perhaps, were destined to be his, then dashed the blissful thought away, as too much joy would overcome him quite.

Percy took leave of Dentnoris in happier spirits than his lamenting mother expected, and our hero, perceiving no glance of trouble on the countenance of his supposed rival, anxiously reverted to his first conception—that it was too late for himself to hope the heart of his "remembered love" free to suffer his devotion, or accept his addresses. The certainty of his birth and title could not operate with them now. Alas!—he pondered—they come too late.

The carriage rolled away, when Percy Loder

mounted his horse, vainly dreaming that a sunny day's exercise might regain for him a portion of his lost serenity. Heigho! could any memory be found to fling a pall over the melancholy past.

Percy would have given many worlds to find the charmed recollection—his heart sank within him. Even Harold might have condoled with the guileless sorrow; there was no envy towards his old acquaintance; far from it—he had masked his cheek in smiles, daring not to trust his voice, that Harold should read how little aught but joy in his friend's joy he experienced. How inconsistent is human nature! A sigh of deep despondency would have accomplished more for this desire than all his glad expression.

Percy never contemplated a chance, but that Harold's accession to rank would prove the guarantee to Miss Clairlowe's regard—he had not mused upon any unexpected embar-

rassing circumstances, or conjured up any of the dull earth's obstacles to their immediate union.

Then, again, the careful manner with which Lord Dentnoris had eschewed every conversation leading to the mention of one name, disturbed his opinion, and induced a fresh argument.

Dentnoris appeared to admire Lady Delvor, and, perchance, thought Percy, this change of fortune may influence his views—peradventure he may seek a different sort of wife to that sweet girl. "No, no, Harold, you are a lucky man," murmured the soliloquist.

"And why?" asked a voice from among the brushwood.

"You invariably take one by surprise, Emmersly. A man never knows when or where, or even how, to expect you."

"Nor woman neither," replied the Baronet. "'Tis the very art of life. Lady Wilverton is at the Castle, is she not?"

"No; she and Denthoris left only an hour ago."

"Ah, indeed; I hear that 'the lucky dog' you were apostrophising has secured his title to birth legitimate, and wealth proportionate, and weds most happily (if wealthily in Padua) the fair Mary Anne Belton."

"Oh, no. No such thing. You are handsomely mounted, Emmersly," observed Mr. Loder, willing to change the subject.

"Yes, pretty well. I brought 'Gentleman,' the name of my steed, I beg to say, from India with me. He is good for nothing now—some fellow lamed him for me. But say, I intreat you, does not Harold Denthoris mean to marry Miss Belton?"

"I think not; why, she is half a small donkey, rude though it be to apply such Jerusalem epithets to a lady."

"But what of the donkeyism? I never considered him particularly wise," retorted Sir Brook.

"Too wise for that, Emmersly."

"Why, it will not be his first broken engagement if he departs from it, I believe."

Percy Loder indignantly rejoined: "Were you never guilty of similar forgetfulness?"

"Such events occur sometimes—fortunately it is always the woman's fault."

"Not so, my dear sir. Poor Gertrude!"

The profligate started. "Is she dead?" he inquired.

"Not absolutely dead, but dying, I fear."

"Ah, for love of young Clairlowe!"

"I must quicken my pace," said the annoyed Percy.

"To the park gate of Squire Bailey I may accompany you. I lunch there," remarked Sir Brook, quietly putting his horse into a canter.

At the entrance to some thickly wooded grounds the two gentlemen separated, each glad to be rid of an uncongenial companion.

Percy, delighted to commune with his almost

obliterated thought, ere his meditations were unpleasingly interrupted, while Sir Brook Emmersly equally rejoiced in the prospect of a great luncheon party.

Wakeful with the hope of again seeing her beloved country, Miss Clairlowe was the earliest riser in the hotel, long before the drowsy domestics thought fit to leave their sleep, enjoying her busy occupation — collecting scattered bijouterie and precious volumes, dear for the various givers' sakes, when her attention was arrested by a torn half sheet of note paper, written in a female hand, though the pen had shed the ink over the pure white in traces of unquestionable passion. Mary looked and read—read again. The cold dews gathered on her brow—she did not faint; her mind was too alive to the task before her, and summoning her utmost courage, she calmly folded up the note, and pursued her faltering way.

Miss Clairlowe had discovered Madame

Estalles' hasty adieu, and again she read its dismal record.

"I CALLED to give you the information, but Sir Brook Emmersly prevented my protracted stay at your hotel. Lodwick, your brother, fell in a duel on Thursday morning last. Mr. Dentnoris was married on the same day. I have the English paper containing a more explicit account, if you would like to have it."

Here was the very refinement of persecution—her brother dead, her lover married! revealed, too, by the relentless Countess. The unconsciousness of despair at length overpowered poor Mary—her surcharged heart refused its office, ceasing almost to beat, as she sank listlessly on the sofa.

It happened that Lady Wilverton had besought Harold, either personally or by letter, to acquaint their friends with his brighter fate; he, however, pertinaciously resisted the intreaty, compromising the matter by despatch-

ing his valuable Wilson with a note from George, and a budget from his aunt. The man had arrived late at night, and yet was astir with the daybreak, intending to hurry the idle menials in preparing for departure.

In the drawing-room he perceived the death-like figure of his lord's "beloved one."

Servants, especially valets, have a quick perception in matters concerning their masters' hearts; and as Wilson quietly approached the suffering girl, his eye rested on the strangely blotted note, still clenched in icy rigidity. Wilson was a husband and a father, with goodness and honourable principle to grace a nobleman; his first care was to restore suspended animation, his next gently to extricate the paper from the relaxing hold, to read, and deposit it in his pocket.

The step of Colonel Clairlowe was heard approaching, while a shudder from his daughter told of reviving sense; the considerate servant gladly availing himself of the fortunate moment,

whispered into her ear, "It is all false, dear young lady—all false, false as herself!"

Colonel Clairlowe at length ascertained that poor Mary had fainted; and, supposing it occasioned by her early, unusual toil, harassed as she had been for the last few weeks, bade Wilson call her mother; "and then," said the blunt soldier, "come back to me, man, and tell me how you came here; for it's odd, to be sure, Mary should faint like this; my poor darling," muttered her parent, as a suspicion of something wrong crept into his generous mind.

Wilson did not lag over his errand one brief instant, and he returned to relate the manner in which he had found Miss Clairlowe. "Here is the ugly note, if you please, sir," continued he, taking from his pocket the defaced billet; "but if you will wait a little, sir, I will fetch the letters I brought from the Rectory; not believing any of the family would be astir so early, I left them in my portmanteau, sir."

"Yes, certainly; be quick! Are they all well?"

"Quite well, sir. I hope Miss Grey is better."

"We did think she was better yesterday, but this morning I hear she has passed a very restless night."

"My Lord is very ——"

"Your Lord! who is he?"

"He was Mr. Harold Dentnoris, sir; however, the Almighty pushes truth foremost in spite of evil-doers, and it has been discovered that the old Lord Dentnoris' brother held the title a little wrong, sir. So it now comes to his eldest son, who is my master; that's it, sir. I shouldn't wonder but the letters has something to say about it, sir," said Wilson, assuming the air of a satisfied comforter, seeing the eyes of Miss Clairlowe riveted on his lips, as though she would have snapped at each word, let alone swallowing them—at least such was Wilson's description of her looks, when the happy Harold became his listener, many long months after these events.

"Papa, I cannot comprehend Wilson's story," said Mary, scarcely having regained sufficient composure to judge tranquilly of sound or scene before her.

"He says, my child, the letters will explain; here they are, too—bring them here, Wilson."

The father was desired to read George's for her.

"My dear Miss Clairlowe,

"Harold is a Lord at last. Do make haste home. We shall all be happy then.

"Your affectionate,

"G. D."

But the poor girl still remembered the dreadful intelligence conveyed in Madame Estalles' note; and consciousness once more forsook her.

Lodwick's letter must be transcribed; it embraces much that is unintelligible, and explains the mysterious wickedness of Sir Brook's visit:—

"MY DEARLY ESTEEMED FATHER, MOTHER, SISTER, AND COUSIN,

"I can hardly wish Gertrude to hear how headstrong I have been lately, yet leave my character to your discretionary use.

"You know I left Marchmont, on the day you quitted England, with the intention of joining my regiment. I went to London, and presented myself at the Horse Guards according to the Duke's direction; he positively refused my joining with such a pale face—bade me take six months extension of leave, for such a specimen of an Englishman would be laughed at by the Afghans. Upon this I ran down to Dentnoris; poor fellow, he is sadly fallen off. By the way, there's a change over the spirit of his dream with a vengeance!—a title, and £20,000 a-year, bang — I say, Mary! Well, at the Castle I spent a pleasant week; was glad to see Percy again. The Delvers joined the party for a few days, so we had a merry time of it; the lady is a most confounded flirt, though.

Emmersly came occasionally, but fought rather shy of one Lodwick Clairlowe. And now stop, till you swear to keep my secret, all of you dear ones—if any soul tells it to Gertrude it shall be myself. Excuse me, dear mother. The facts occurred in this way: At dinner, one night, (I suppose he had miscounted his glasses), he chose to speak slightingly of our pure, good, spotless cousin. Of course I instantly rose from table, making apologies to Lord Loder and Percy. The ladies had quitted us a few minutes previously. Loder followed me very quickly, volunteering his services; they were, I can assure you, gratefully accepted; and, after quietly talking over matters connected with this world's fairings, I was alone. About twelve o'clock a most insulting misnamed apology arrived; Loder had not come back, consequently I could do nothing farther than say, an answer would be vouchsafed if my friend approved, but that my firm belief was, he had not seen the note just received in an unsealed cover. I

was sorry for having read it in Loder's absence —it was not right. Well, two o'clock brought him; and what do you think the monster had done? irritated Loder almost to frenzy. A quarter of an hour more, and we sallied forth together, determined to constrain the man to fight. I wish you had seen the demoniac countenance presented to us, my dear old sire. Would you wish me to conclude the tale briefly; I will soon finish it. Well, the man promised to meet us at four o'clock, behind Salter's hill. Until six we stayed on the ground; at seven Loder sought him—himself, his horses, groom, all were gone, and a simple note left for me! it ran thus:—

"'Do not allow such rancour to put your life in jeopardy, Clairlowe; I like you too well to be accessory to such a proceeding.

"'(Signed), 'B. E.'

"This is the story; and although I was outrageously mad at the disappointment, still

the episode removes him from our haunts—he never dare see England more.

"And now, my dear good mother, precious Gertry, and Mary, good bye.

"Believe me, dear sir,

"Your affectionate son,

"L. C."

It seemed well nigh impossible for our travellers to comprehend the hidden wickedness of Sir Brook Emmersly's disposition.

The father of Lodwick, the guardian of Gertrude, had sympathized with this man's griefs but yesterday, at a period when he was flying from the just indignation of his son!

Sternly the soldier took his place by his daughter—his brow bent, and hands clenched, as if exemplifying in his posture the crushing inclination of his resolve to demand, to obtain satisfaction.

"Oh, papa, do not look so wretched," said his daughter; "Lodwick, thank Heaven, is

preserved for us. Gertry, our darling, must leave us soon; but we will teach him to control the selfishness of his sorrow—even, perhaps, he shall rejoice in her heavenward flight. She will be happier there. And, dearest father, does she not appear so peacefully to await death's cold coming? Let us, therefore, abstain from allowing our griefs to disturb her; yet, papa, she will not inquire—she will be silently unhappy to see you thus."

"That villain!"

"Come, dear papa, remember, he has been effectually driven off now. Ah, yes; how immeasurably more will the announcement of her death punish him than the infliction of our bitterest revenge. Shall I take mamma the letters?"

"No, no! I will, in a minute," replied Colonel Clairlowe.

"And you will see, papa, how heroically mamma will take this business."

"Ye are women, only women, Mary," said

the father, as she bent over his broad high forehead.

Miss Clairlowe had not read the character of Sir Brook correctly; in her store of sad prophecies she had never calculated that he would gladden at the news of Gertrude's death.

In the chronicles of his inward thought was graved the gratifying thought that ere long such must occur.

"Yes," soliloquised this "merchant of ill," "I must arrange this last affair with all speed; I must conciliate this 'son of York;' I would not be entirely off with the Clairlowes; they are commodious appendages to a man's society in England—a substantial pair of old Danes; thus, I, being Dane, like them, since I love myself. If the young fellow won't come round, why I'll try the old one and his obsequious half. They shall see tears from 'poor Brook Emmersly;' the old soldier's heart is soft, thank God. Gertrude living! Succumb a little longer, fluttering heart, to the minion in my

bower; the Aius Locutius of my soul! Married she is, 'tis true, and better it be true—a splendid point gained, lending her my pretty sea-bordered cot; and if the Count's sails are not suddenly furled beneath my windows, some day, I'll bargain to prevent her flirting with any other one. After all, she is not the sworn coquette Charlotte Delvor is—Charlotte loves nobody well—Estalles, you were a good sort of fellow—my scheme for carrying you off at first was fine," muttered the exulting man. "So you thought, silly fool, she really had left you, and in the carriage taken flight. Alas, she slept, while I was up and doing! If I can help it, you have no more happy days before you. But rouse thee, gentle sir, methinks I need much care in the adjustment of my dress to-day. By Jove, the eaglet looked amazing jealous, not two hours ago. Alas, poor Gertrude, why not be kind and die? and Mary—but with all my wooing, she certainly was most obdurate. Then my beautiful aunt—Devil and buttercups!

but, enough of her. Yet, yes; say on, Brook Emmersly — I have never loved since that Abbey business—no! not even Gertrude's loveliness won from my heart one beat of passion since I saw Marianne Wilverton that night. Why now, still do I dread to hear her chilly accents, or bear the sparkle of those fathomless blue orbs addressing me in the tones of politeness. I am indeed degraded; few besides thyself, my good fellow, are acquainted with that fact. My recollection brings the curdling farewell again. Out upon my memory—that love was truly sure—I still respect her fervently: and when my proud heart's quailing seems about to terminate, none other shall plead for me at the footstool of the Heaven she taught me when a wayward boy to reverence and adore. Brook Emmersly, these namby pamby moodinesses suit you not—I shall forget my calling, Ida—bless thy fiery beauty! fear not I revel in aught else, except the delight of conquering its inextinguishable fires. John," con-

tinued Sir Brook, "send 'Gentleman' at three. I ride and dine with Madame Estalles; and now for dinner and wine."

Ida, dressed in black velvet, looked quiet and less angry than her tormentor anticipated.

"Two wine-glasses," observed Sir Brook Emmersly, pointing to the decanter, &c., on the table, "visitors, I suppose?"

"Yes, Sir Brook."

"Sir Brook! What, ruffled still?"

"Not ruffled, only tired: I have been laughing at a lady; one who preaches to me about gaiety in Estalles' absence; she tells me that society condemns me for your frequent visits."

"Fudge! nonsense. Who said this?"

"Mrs. ———, your friend!"

"Has she been endeavouring to poison your mind?"

"Poison my mind, Sir Brook! That is too perfect a dissemblance—my mind! but she fears you may be jealous, too, of Mr. Ichell, he

whom you brought yourself, and singled out as a foil."

"Stuff—ridiculously absurd," remarked her visitor, attributing the advice most justly to its proper cause, yet anxious to divert the mind of his victim from any creed that might interfere with his convenience. "It is an immense pity," continued he, "that women do not discern their own blemishes in lieu of a frail sister's."

"A frail sister's, Sir Brook! do not torture me again, or you may rue the attempt," rejoined the Countess, warmly.

"Nay, nay! Ida, love, my anger was not for thee."

"Your anger I despise."

"Alas! but what did you say?" asked the Baronet in his blandest accent.

"Oh, I invented a mournful thought or two, to relieve myself from her admonitory presence, and at the evidence of a contrite spirit, the lady walked away."

Sir Brook's system of humbling his prey seldom proved effectual with Ida Estalles; she affected meekness in moments of necessity, and willed not that the subject of the wine-glasses should be renewed. Her natural fondness for intrigue exceeded his to an extraordinary degree. The wife of Estalles often outwitted him, without his having the slightest suspicion of defeat; upon this occasion she succeeded equally. Ida knew, that although her admirer approved *les favoris*, black and extensive, none would ever thrive upon his own smooth cheek, to which the fierce growth of several straggling hairs beneath the lower lip gave sufficient demonstration.

"Would you drive me from you, my charming Countess? verily you look as bright as heretofore, notwithstanding last night's hot tears."

"Oh, dear me, no! Habit has rendered your presence indispensable!"

Brook was fairly puzzled.

"And the recollection of past hours," added

Madam Estalles, with a sigh, "frequently penetrates through that habit, half eliciting a wish that neither of us had changed—grown thus indifferent."

"Indifferent, love! Yet if those vanished hours have power to yield thee dreams of happiness, let us build from present reality histories of joy, for fancy's blest hereafter. Come, my beautiful! come give me once again, for this intense appealing, a sigh so full of love—you scarce can breathe it? No tears—no, all merry wit, and flashes from the bowl. Let us to dinner?"

"Stay, Brook Emmersly—I am changed, if you are not; I only on my knees beseech you to forget we loved each other then. Nay, no more empty speeches; you fled from my intreaties—you avoided my urgent wish for our marriage."

"Ida, why it was the very interest of my life—what I sought most earnestly."

"You sought to marry me, Emmersly? You

spoke not the remotest word of marriage, except when answering my solicitations, and then your negatives crumbled up my pride, till death, aye, death or Estalles, were my resources."

"A man could scarcely be bullied into wedlock, Ida: though I longed to make you mine, my pride also took alarm. Come let us be friends; dear friends, I meet you here a mother and a wife, we will recall only the happy past."

"To make the present sadder by the contrast," said the lady.

"No, no. Even should I think proper to marry Gertrude—"

"Brook, do not name her—it is not in the power of woman to listen to your idolatry for her, nor admit the living memory of that time, when all your passionate raving, your words, your looks, your tenderness, all, all were mine." And in the violence of her resentment the Countess burst into hysteric sobs.

Sir Brook did not trouble himself to soothe

her rending sighs, but sauntered idly into the garden, thence back to dinner—dined alone—passed into the library, inscribed a petition for a ride, which was answered by a verbal "oui," sank into a sleepy hollow to muse upon the drudgery of a lover's existence, while Ida's tears, undried by sounds of sympathy, were brushed away—the singular consolation for her grief emanating from the success of her ruse, to banish every trace of that morning's quest.

CHAPTER IV.

Oh, those are tears of bitterness,
Wrung from the breaking heart,
When two, blest in their tenderness,
Must learn to live apart.

Yet there was light around her brow,
A holiness in those dark eyes,
Which show'd, though wand'ring earthward now,
Her spirit's home was in the skies.

MOORE.

"HERE they are, here they are!" exclaimed George, as the heavily laden coach entered the green park.

Lodwick, Sarah, all were assembled to welcome back, more in sorrow than in joy, the faded cousin.

Lady Wilverton, however, considerately despatched the avant courier to request no one of the expectant party would show themselves until the excitement of Gertrude's happy return subsided.

The wasted girl's flushed cheek betrayed how great her gladness was, to see the fine old home again.

Lodwick gazed with distracting impatience while his father bore the fragile form of his aimless love into the house. He had prepared himself to witness the havoc of disease, but never conceived it possible such cruel inroad could have been made in the few weeks of absence—wasted, withered thus! Oh, no, his mind foretold no mournful wreck like this before him. Her long black hair floated over a neck, too softly white for any save the habitants of Heaven, the once so full black eyes now shining in their hollow darkness; the hands, the small white hands, emaciated and lank, yet dearer by a millionfold than in their

rosy-tipped beauty; he seized them in his own, and in that pressure, in the glance she gave, read death to his hope, but everliving life to her half-parted soul.

Mrs. Clairlowe disengaged her son from his excruciating distress, intreating him to combat with his worldlier feelings, and spare the dying sufferer a knowledge of his agony.

It was a melancholy re-union.

"I see neither Mr. nor Lord Dentnoris," said the invalid.

"My brother will return to-morrow, and Harold waits only for the welcome summons," replied Lady Wilverton, calling up an angel smile, to cheer her sobbing friend, poor Mary. "I sent George and Sarah to meet me here, but Harold is too big for my orders now."

"Ah, truly, dearest lady. Is he well?"

Gratefully Miss Clairlowe acknowledged her cousin's goodness — these questions were for her heart's peace.

"Sweet Gertry, repose thyself, my darling,'

said Mary. "An hour's sleep will rest your poor eyes—do try it. Sarah, bring me a book. I will read you to your dreams, Gertry, and then sit quiet by your side. Aunt Marianne is going to speak to mamma."

"A book. Ah, dear Miss Grey, that book you used to like has stains of tear-drops on it now—it is quite spoiled."

The flush re-crimsoned the pale face, and one deep sigh succeeded.

"Will she never cease to startle at the sound of any theme connected with that wicked man?" thought Mary.

"The Bible, love, is better; it is best, Sarah, for your dying playmate," said Miss Grey, still longing for another touch of the favourite volume, for, had not Gertrude's last interview with the owner of it given a fresh beam of changeless love to her—had not his last words to her been, as ever, full of hope, and fixed devotedness?

Believe it all, frail sufferer, wake not from

such pleasant phantoms to truth's sterner dictates. Mary, let the blighted mourner think not the work of sure destruction is his glory.

Day by day the worthy pastor discovered new traits of heavenly resignation in the dying Christian. Her more than parents watched the flitting life with ceaseless care. Lodwick and Harold were at length denied access to her chamber. The physician trembled lest the son might be present at his cousin's last sigh.

Poor Lodwick—he sat apart; he mourned, not as passionate young lovers sometimes mourn—no word escaped him; he felt that she must die, and the stony draught of hopelessness had choked the well of soothing emotions—he had no tears, no sighs, his bursting heart no intercourse with other thoughts than those that helped to build up barriers against hope and resignation. Pale and cold, he stalked across the passage near her door, a shadow of

despair. Peace came at last, if that can be called peace, which, after toilsome tutoring, bids the heart's-aching hide itself in sole communion with the doom awarded. Lodwick tried to picture Gertrude among the angels of that high world where sorrow and disorder reign not.

One morning he had nearly realized the conception—he looked upon the door separating him only from the form he pictured in the glorious firmament of heaven! its brightest star, and earthly hope came back upon his memory. His eyes fixed there, where really Gertrude Grey existed. A second step, and his hand grasped the handle of the lock—it was turned, the nurse only issued therefrom. Her eyes were tearful, yet whose were not so at times?

Alas! Lodwick Clairlowe, why did the certainty of her departure cleave to your tenacious soul. He reached his room again, and sank upon a chair. None told him she was dead,

quite dead—none told him that the lids had closed for ever—none bid him look to the clear heaven, and feel it brighter! My heart's life is there. Be calm! the soul hath left its clay-made dwelling upon earth. None said—Entomb her!

Oh, there are clear presentiments in love, and Lodwick knew his mind must brook the hearing she was dead. He had prepared it—at least humanly he thought his tempered despair could bear to hear the revelation.

The damp dew of death seemed gathering on his own white brow, when the door opened; Harold advanced towards him, his voice forbade mention of the event he had been deputed to reveal. Lodwick moved not, but gazed sorrowfully on his friend, who silently accepted the chair opposite, to which a heavy sigh directed him. No word escaped. At length, to Harold's relief, Mr. Dentnoris joined them, his dark eyes laden with brimming tears as he took the young soldier's passive hand.

"She has left our earthly sphere, Lodwick," at length articulated the Rector, "and waits among the blest for us to meet her in that purer home, and be her dear companions into Heaven. Lodwick!" repeated Beverley Dentnoris.

The young lover started.

"Gertrude," was all the answer.

"Be consoled, dear Lodwick; have we any goal on earth so worthy of your sainted love? have we among the beauties of our world, guerdons such as she hath won? Glory such as her incorporeal loveliness receiveth at His hands, who gave and who hath taken away?

"Why repine, that she hath left all suffering and sorrow here, to reign among the beatified elect?

"She hath been tried, severely tried, during her sojourn here. Shall we mourn that she hath ended every grief, and gained the great reward—Lodwick!"

"Gertrude," again responded the bereft mourner.

"See her, my young friend, as she now is, clothed in robes of purity and joy — smiling——"

"Does she smile — still smile — and yet gone, quite gone from——"

A deep sigh — harrowing, heart-breaking groans, impeded his utterance and relieved his bursting sorrow.

Harold quitted the chamber on the entrance of Colonel and Mrs. Clairlowe, whose anxious ears had caught the long low moanings of their afflicted son.

The kneeling figure of Mary Clairlowe attracted Lord Dentnoris, as he passed poor Gertrude's room.

Yet at such a moment, above all other times, he dared not cast on the picture more than one hurried look. Lady Wilverton saw, and beckoned him to the sleeping image of the corpse.

Mary's prayer had been brief; she had not seen her cousin since life had fled, and fearing to trust her sorrow in the presence of those so dear to her, quietly withdrew; but soon hearing steps descending the stairs, and conjecturing that Lady Wilverton and Lord Dentnoris had retired, ventured back to muse by her loved companion's untended remains. She touched the half open door, and her heart beat quickly on viewing the group within.

Gertrude Grey extended on the white bed, clothed still in the garments of gay life, the canopy of snowy linen suspended from above her. On the opposite side knelt Lady Wilverton; near her; on the other, Harold, grasping the chill fingers of the newly dead. She looked upon the group—it was most sadly beautiful.

That form! the form of the dead girl—surely death has stolen nothing from it yet—surely breathing life is yet existent, only still and gentle as the soul of Gertrude Grey for

ever was, and will be. If aught has quitted those fair features, it has crept away too gently even to rob the dead one of her bloom.

These were Miss Clairlowe's first impressions; her second grieved her: she looked, however, kindly upon both, and again retreated. Lady Wilverton's movement caused Lord Dentnoris to observe her approach; and his listless attention when rising to make place for a new arrival, pained poor Mary; who, bending in token of mute thankfulness, stole from the scene.

The meeting of Harold and Mary had been uncheered by even the slightest re-assurance of their reciprocal attachment; and both shunned the changed manner, each fancied only assumed.

Mary dreaded to encounter him; a thousand conflicting arguments presented themselves; the fear that he might ascribe her readiness to receive his addresses to his increase of wealth, or confirmed title to his father's name,

restrained her, when she longed to show how dear his presence was—longed to set aside his gloomy contemplations, which, spite of himself, were paling his face, and wasting his health.

While Harold, on the other hand, remembering how timid, yet always warm-hearted, she had been to the untitled—the disinherited; and attributing to a patronising consciousness of superior good fortune, that which had been sincere and holy in its frank truthfulness, shrank with pride from the idea that Miss Clairlowe's present conduct indicated her dislike to his attentions.

"Would I had assured myself long ago that somewhat of friendliness was indicated in those shy looks, replete with comforting beams, that they were really kindly meant. They never shine for Lord Dentnoris; and, maybe, were but intended to commiserate the unfortunate."

The day of solemn burial arrived; Lodwick promised to be calm!

Colonel Clairlowe and Harold stood on either side of him; tranquilly the young soldier marked the coffin containing the dead, till the sable attendants commenced lowering it into its narrow cell; he made no sign, his dilated orbs alone dropped tears like lead upon the marble floor. Nothing remained of that which held the body. Without a motion, except the one hard sigh, a sigh that in bursting seemed to break away the soul's communion with humanity, he drooped his head upon his breast, to look no more on the all-hallowed spot. They dragged him to his home, and bade his lonely heart find comfort in her better lot.

CHAPTER V.

Fortune reigns in gifts of the world,
Not in the lineaments of nature.

SHAKSPERE.

But ask thou not if happiness be there,
If the loud laugh disguise convulsive throe,
Or if the brow the heart's true livery wear,
Lift not the festal mask! enough to know
No scene of mortal life but teems with mortal woe.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

"YES! Aunt Marianne, I feel too certain that Miss Clairlowe will accept the Duke."

"No! her friend may, but Mary never. No! I wish she could remember Landsworth. Yet she was so young when they left England," said Lady Wilverton, pacing to and fro in her fa-

vourite old breakfast-room at the Manor House, whence the presumptive heir had ejected her brother several years before, and to which she had returned with its present lord on the morning alluded to.

"The coronet has no charm for your love—her heart is bound in iron links by a geni, and until he looseneth the aforesaid bonds, captive it must remain; this geni, be it known, is a sad tyrant in affairs of love, and, if I were Mary, when freedom and power were allotted me, I would use them.

"No affirmative will a dukedom win from her, if simply depending on its own attractions; and in this instance, even provoking, you must admit that nothing else has the Duke of St. ——— to offer! Ah, you shake your head—men do not understand mute affection."

"Is my poor worship then not mute?"

"Yes, yes, Harold, to the world, but not to me! Now tell me, do you think Mary ever spoke of her affection?"

"She has none for me, or I—her worse than slave—had years ago discovered it."

"I have something to say, Harold. Do you remember, the other evening, when you requested me to favour you with the result of my hallucinations, at a moment when Lucy Ashmore forbade the opportunity for reply? Did I not perceive a slight colouring of jealousy, when she made her attack on little thin Mr. Cottar's heart?"

"By Heaven, no! Acquit me, lady, of the daring interference! I aspire not to the tender notice of any individual. When I pay Miss Ashmore the compliment of a sigh, then denounce me as a blind fool!"

"A conceited speech, Lord Dentnoris."

"When I select my wife, she will not expect me tamely to submit to the disposal of her time after the fashion of that vacant-hearted woman."

"Do not flatter yourself, Harold, that you will enjoy such monopoly."

"Aunt Marianne," retorted her nephew in surprise, "you astonish me by this new doctrine!"

"Forgive me, I look around on man's variability, and, expecting nobler actions from the nobler race, wonder at the vacillating crowd."

"Peradventure, lady mine, I can divine the thoughts unuttered, yet hanging on your lips, and longing thence to leap, just for the cruel purpose of confoundedly confusing your submissive hearer."

"You really speak so vainly, Harold, I can scarcely find patience to answer you, although your superciliousness is merely assumed; but tell me, sage diviner! what mysteries lie undisclosed, connected with the compliments I have in wiser keeping for you?"

"Listen, Aunt Marianne. You would say, there is the Rev. Beverley Dentnoris at the head of the 'changeables;' he, forsooth, has wedded Mrs. Bacon. Then Lodwick Clairlowe is himself again, and, some affirm, again in

jeopardy. Then little Sally has already grieved over the blush of a maiden heartach. You and I, Aunt, are the only two exceptions to such deviating faith."

"You and I, Harold! You give yourself more credit for adherence to your Venetian flame than any other person allows you."

"No soul shall read the fondness of my recollections, dear Lady Wilverton. Miss Clairlowe shall not have my name to grace her list of conquests."

"Harold, you are unjust. I tell you that Mary Clairlowe is decidedly the most superior woman I ever met; and you may learn to think so when it will be too late!"

"Speak not in such displeasure; I respect Miss Clairlowe beyond any one."

"Yet, Harold, you can ascribe to her a motive unworthy of the most confirmed coquette."

"I did most unhappily utter the sentiment. Oh, Lady Wilverton, I feel soured, galled, tor-

tured, to believe that, when she considered herself safe from my proposals, she tolerated me; nay more, resented not the only look I ever gave of love as uncontrollable as inextinguishable; but now, however—now—the wretch is free! avoids him. Lady Wilverton, I have sought her eyes in vain—ever have they been averted."

"Ah! gentle Mary, this was love's timidity. You are the dullest lover I ever knew, Harold."

"Timidity or not, you will acknowledge it was not kind. Perchance her very superiority is beyond my dull comprehension. Oh that I could read the only heart I covet."

"Proverbially selfish men are! Your pride would sooner wreck a heart like Mary's, than suffer a brief pang yourself; and most unendurably provoking is it when you add intentional blindness to the failing."

"Lady Wilverton, the crisis is at hand, and I am serious in this last confession. I have

never for one moment loved any other than Mary Clairlowe; yet she rejects the simplest act of kindness from me."

"You mistake her," said Lady Wilverton.

"Stay, dear aunt, I know she loves me not! and, therefore, long since yielded my fate into His hands, who will direct all things rightly. I hope no more for myself in the affair."

"Philosophy, perhaps," observed Lady Wilverton; "certainly not piety."

"Neither one nor the other," replied Harold; "but it is another imperfection added to the many. At least, Aunt Marianne, you would not have me condescend to woo one who cared not for Harold Dentnoris, and avoids, moreover, the new-found heir. Bring proof that Mary's kindlier thoughts were mine in obscurity and poverty, and then ——"

"What then, Harold?"

"I would ask her, on my knees, to be my wife."

"But, Harold, did you not say you had un-

equivocal assurance that her marriage with the Duke was already settled?"

"True! and when I read the newspaper's announcement of the detestable union, I fear, my shadow will quickly fall away. My oracle plays me false if that event be not speedily consummated."

"There is a little fable about 'a dog in a manger,' and another about another and the shadow of his dainty morsel, which the betraying streamlet, like the rivers of pride, magnified into a greater prize—a more satisfying portion than the tangible reality!"

"Ah, yes!" responded Harold, "there are other fables, too, of Cinderella's lost slipper; so, as it is on the stroke of ten, I needs must off to breakfast with the Herbertons—this *déjeuner a la fourchette* is a novel treat from them, and I have a long drive before me."

Lord Dentnoris thought himself incapable of an idea derogatory to his attachment to Miss Clairlowe, and was, therefore, blissfully insen-

sible to the fascination every one else perceived Miss Ashmore exercised over him. He had been induced, from the intimacy existing between the inmates of the Grange and his home, to render his presence a sort of necessity to Lady Delvor; and, in doing so, had wantonly expressed admiration for her volatile friend. Nevertheless, not one iota of love had escaped the casket wherein it lay—devoted to dearer reminiscences, and sacred as his soul.

The world and Charlotte Delvor attributed his attentions to a motive, far remote from mere amusement; while Mary heard the reports of his gallantries, and wept at a lover's apostacy.

The name of Lord Dentnoris resounded solemnly from the hall to the ante-room, passing from one to the other of the powdered menials. Harold felt unaccountably oppressed at the echo of his title; countless memories rushed through his mind, and one, the most intrusive, that ere this, Mr. Slade had concluded the pre-

parations in Grosvenor-square, and that the approaching month would enrol his name among the senators of our land, and be moreover devoted to thoughts distinct from his daily dreams of Mary and her pride, busied him, when the whispering sounds of softer voices mingled with the well-known hum of announcement.

Lord Herberton and his daughter approached. "Good morning, Dentnoris—glad, uncommonly glad, to see you; breakfast waits, and if the long drive has sharpened your appetite, as much as the long waiting has rendered our hungry spirits keen, you'll be all the better an hour hence, I think," exclaimed the good-humoured old man.

"I really have many apologies to make," said Harold, hurriedly.

"No, no! no, no!—oh, no! There are few people I would wait for—you are one of them, young man, and thus I leave Charlotte to your care, while I pursue the gloriously fine Mrs. Ashmore."

"Papa insisted on waiting for you, Lord Dentnoris," said his companion, "although we ladies unanimously opposed so egregious a mistake."

"And why was not the opposition victorious? your wise suggestion ought to have been immediately carried into effect; however, surely you could resist the temptation of hunger to wait your most devoted slave," remarked Harold, playfully.

"I could have patiently withstood its cravings to convince myself of that happy consideration, or for the sake of telling you, I cared less for it without you—but others waited; besides, as you are all self-sufficient enough to ask the question, I will say no more on the subject."

"You possess an imperfect opinion of my accomplishments—self-sufficiency would be too desirable a study, could I hope to attain proficiency in it," replied our hero.

"The good folks here are so averse to fun, now-a-days, that to make them stare a little

would be worth any trouble—no matter who plays the martyr-part."

"Well, I am inexpressibly thankful for the complimentary distinction. Will you allow me to deposit you in this corner while I do your bidding, and bow good-morrow to your noble mother, lady?"

"Pray leave me; I apprehend no sadness will overtake me for your absence—prolong it till doomsday, if you please—I form a tiny item in the price current of your friends!" said the beautiful woman.

"Pardon me! I go to confess my dereliction, and hear forgiveness for occasioning the breakfast's delay; you are quite sure there is no other person present for whom I would leave your side."

Dentnoris meant no more nor less than he said; yet the vanity of Lady Delvor led her to interpret his ingenuous candour very differently, and the magnificent daughter of that house turned laughingly away, to hide the chagrin

but fruitlessly concealed from her neighbouring guest.

Lady Herberton delightedly shook hands with the favoured visitor, as Miss Ashmore, with many a witching blandishment ready for the field, timidly advanced to receive her share of greeting.

Noon had long since passed when Lord Dentnoris re-entered the door of his country home.

"Any post to-day?" he inquired.

"None at all, my lord, except a letter for Miss Dentnoris, from Clarens."

The heart of the questioner beat quickly, and the impassioned lines of his namesake murmured on his lips. "Clarens, sweet Clarens, birthplace of deep love! Where is Lady Wilverton?"

"Gone into the village, my lord, and desired, if you came before her return, I was to tell you, if you possibly could, to join her there, my lord," said Wilson.

Our hero deliberated: he must see Sarah in

the first place. "Where was she?" he again inquired.

"In the garden, my lord; would you please I should call the young lady?"

"No," replied the master, "I will seek her there."

He was not long in discovering her retreat. Sarah, at the sound of footsteps, vainly crumbled the fragments of a letter into her little hand; but Lord Dentnoris, having been forewarned of the prize, quizzed the blushing girl, till she felt obliged to confess "the post brought a silly letter from George—too silly," added she, "to show you, Harold; but I must do as he desires me, and give you all the news in it. Some of the information will prove Aunt Marianne quite wrong. Miss Clairlowe is married. Oh! Harold, what is the matter? You will fall—sit down here—do, pray, sit down—how pale, and yet how red you look again—dear me, dear me, I will call Wilson."

"No; only lend me your letter, Sarah," said

the brother, kissing the white little arm, clinging round his neck.

"Shall I read it to you? It will tire you to read such nonsense—the wedding has turned George's head."

Harold took the fatal billet—albeit, small comfort thence ensued.

hen Lord Dent-
"DEAR SARAH, is country home.
"You are growing uired.
age—send me longer letters, ept a letter for
them now twenty times more"
at home. This place is as beat quickly,
Castle was. Poor Miss Clairlo namesake mur-
so depressed at the wedding, y weet Clarens,
very nearly fainted twice. Her is Lady Wil-
that Lady Delvor never looked ha

and now that business is over, and Mary Clairlowe gone, I try to 'scape the riding parties. Mary Anne Belton is more simple than ever; she always prates of my handsome brother, and at the wedding whispered to Mary, 'what a

handsome bridegroom Lord Dentnoris would make;' I could have stung her. Mr. Clarke talks of leaving this to-morrow, for Rome—I shall hail the change with sincere delight. Colonel Clairlowe says, Mary was not wise; but she, poor dear lady, had not spirit to refuse any one, particularly the one who wanted her.

"Tell me, Sally, how you all are? Ask Harold to come to us; he has nothing to do, and it is such prosy work to have only one's tutor's society.

"Give my compliments to Charles Bacon, unless he gets too many from you. Uncle Beverley has all particulars.

"Your affectionate, G. D."

"Thank you, Sarah," said the unhappy lover, in a tone of deep despondency, "that will do;" and Harold Dentnoris sat fixed in musings on the mutability of human nature.

It was a lovely afternoon; the cool western breeze portended rain, after many days of dearth,

while the firmament beamed radiantly through the wandering clouds. The scene appeared adapted to assist the mood of a heart beyond despair—a heart breathing its latest hope over the gravestone of its fancied idol.

The reports of the few preceding months, and the changeful flights of George's diction, all had been disregarded; by this letter all was confirmed.

"What now is my wealth to me? where now the glory of my honourable name?" sighed Lord Dentnoris—"Baubles luring me on to madness. Mary, my beloved one! mine in dreamy thought no more. Shall I repeat this vainly, and my soul refuse belief? Must I quench the vital spark of my lone being? Go, vision—the Duchess of St. ———. Welcome, killing certainty, I hug you cheerily! compared to the suspense of years, thou art the healthier visitant by far. Oh, Mary! my far off star—my prayer! guide of my soul! farewell. Farewell, Duchess of St.———," repeated Harold, aloud.

"Duchess of St ——. Who is she?" asked Lady Wilverton, approaching her nephew.

"She is married!"

"I suppose so; but what of that? You mean Miss Belton, do you not—Mary Anne's sister?"

"Alas! no. My prediction is verified—Miss Clairlowe wears the coronet."

"And who has communicated the auspicious event, may I ask? Colonel Clairlowe, or her mother?"

"It is stated in a letter from George to Sarah," replied Dentnoris. "Smile no more on the subject, lady; there is no alternative, save firmer credence. I cannot watch your laugh of incredulity—it will drive me distracted, Aunt Marianne," cried he, darting away, and dashing his hand to his brow—"it will destroy my senses. Oh, Heaven! every deed is of Thy will. I bow—I am content."

Lady Wilverton glanced distressedly at the melancholy calm of his manner, then turned

in search of Miss Dentnoris. The merry girl had, however, heard the carriage stop, and hastened (her arms laden with a packet) to meet her aunt.

"Look, dear Harold; may not these be 'the particulars?'" she inquired.

Lady Wilverton opened the treasures, beginning with the Rector's brief summary of continental news. A scream of surprised delight recalled Harold to her side.

"I knew it!"

"Knew what, dear Aunt Marianne? What doe she say?"

"Mary Clairlowe's love to you, Sarah, and myself; her kind remembrances to you, Lord Dentnoris, who," added she, "certainly do not deserve them."

"But of the marriage what is said?" gasped the agitated lover. "Is she really gone?"

"Gone, Harold; what do you mean? Yes, she is gone—gone to visit the dying Countess Estalles!"

"But married?"

"No, she is not married. You ought not to wrong her by the question."

Harold answered not—there was too deep a flood of thankful joy o'erburdening his heart, too great a knowledge of his love's unchained existence, too tumultuous a sense of hope within his breast to be poured out—the great revulsion seemed too much to bear, even the dark grief preceding wakened him not to such perfect knowledge of his affection, as did this flashing joy.

"Take the letters," said the considerate monitress; "the head and front of their long theme is this—Jane Belton is the Duchess of St ——. Mary and Lady Belton, accompanied by Sir William, are on a visit to poor Ida. Join us soon, Harold. Come, Sarah, let us leave Othello, and thank his bright presiding star. We leave him time to act contritely. Harold, your friend Iago is at a place near Clarens. I saw the post-mark inadvertently

on an empty envelope you had cast aside, and well I knew he wrote not to console the wretched. The initials B. E. ever are conspicuous."

CHAPTER VI.

"Slight are the outward signs of evil thought,
Within—within—'twas there the spirit wrought,
Love shows all changes—Hate, Ambition, Guile,
Betray no farther than the bitter smile;
The lip's least curl, the lightest paleness thrown,
Along the govern'd aspect ——"

CORSAIR.

"Alas! she's cold;
Her blood is settled, and her joints are stiff;
Life and these lips have long been separated:
Death lies on her, like an untimely frost
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field."

ROMEO AND JULIET.

RAIN descended in torrents from the unappeasable looking sky, as the Countess Estalles took her work to the little picture gallery, trusting that the diversion might enliven her mind.

The Count had desired her to expect his return—her child was drooping fast—and she only waited the result of its illness to accomplish her intentions.

Scandal had driven her from Paris, Florence, and now from Sir Brook's "bower" she must hastily depart—her quondam friend had learned to view the boy, "Tchell," with jealous eyes, and Ida Estalles felt how difficult it was to bear the perverse spirit of the stately Emmersly.

Yet, with all her innate coquetry, Ida Estalles was not degraded enough to ensnare his youthful competitors.

The sickly infant perished, unmourned save by the Count, its father, whose unexpected return awakened the mother to a sense of its danger.

Alas! Ida had too late discovered the extent of Sir Brook's deceit, and proved beyond a doubt the superiority of the man she wedded.

The death of his son, upon whom the un-

happy Count depended for some few years of comfort, till Ida should leave the world and its intricate wickedness, roused him from his torpid admiration of her beauty, and rent from his darkened eyes the bandage they had worn so long.

Separation ensued, and the remembered "past" was all of consolation Ida Estalles carried from the Parisian multitude.

Of Italy or England the child of General Deschamps dared not think.

The page of childhood's memories was less faulty, less turbulent, but too calm and pure for present enjoyment.

To Hungary she turned! She could not meet the angry, unforgiving brow of a stern father—consequently, with a slender income, reduced from extravagance, she found a refuge in the retired district of ——.

A few nights subsequently to the introduction of the Countess to her "solitude," she was startled by a quiet tapping at the latticed

window. Concluding it was some poor bird, or a branch of the twining woodbine, she removed the rude latch to prevent further annoyance, when, to her horror and disgust, Brook Emmersly presented himself.

With gentle force he displaced the arm that would have arrested his advance, and then bounding over the low sill, deposited his unwelcome person in the comfortless sitting-room.

Amazement and indignation stifled any expression of resentment, when the silence was broken by Sir Brook —"You are glad to see me, my love?"

Startled a little, no doubt, Ida could not realize this cruel temerity—her tongue clave to lips whose hueless colouring betokened the internal struggle of the victim; coldly but haughtily she gazed on the lineaments once so beloved; then, with the violence of pent severity, bursting from her passion's prison house, answered the man who thus so boldly braved the misery of a wretched woman.

"Sir Brook, I charge you to begone—too well I know you now!"

"Not too well, dear," replied Sir Brook, with supercilious precision.

"Nay, speak, I intreat you, beautiful Ida. I thank you for not reproving this testification of my devotedness."

With an austere, penetrating glance, the astonished woman looked again into the face of her former lover. "I can imagine no occupation more degrading than my own, in affording you a reply, Sir Brook," she said.

"Nay, I require no ceremony—treat me as ever—call me Emmersly — Brook — love—slave. Oh, anything save that by which each passionless devotee addresses me. Nay, neither frown on nor scorn your protector."

"Sir Brook Emmersly, you oblige me to practise the lessons of disdain yourself instructed me how to use.

"When Ida Estalles discovered your deep interest in her concerns, she learned to hate,

condemn, thoroughly despise you. You live only to fathom woman's love; for your own, and virtue's sake, stay not to speculate upon her hatred."

She had quelled the ruffian in her look of bitter irony; and for the second time during his wanderings on the earth, Brook Emmersly quailed beneath a woman's eye—the flashes of a revengeful soul fixed him to the spot.

The Countess then raising her exquisite figure to its full height, curling her proud lip, that once in rich ripe loveliness nothing exceeded; her black hair loosely hanging in profuse clusters upon her neck, and her form enveloped in a capacious robe of costly, transparent muslin, approached the door. Brook Emmersly anticipated the movement, and stepping forward to obstruct her way, observed—

"By the god Mars! here is a Bible. Lady, I fear I interrupted you at your devotions?"

It was not as he supposed. The flood of fury had not passed; Ida had stayed it for her purpose. This thwarted, she renewed her rending sarcasms.

"Nay—I have travelled far," said Sir Brook; "have left the Clairlowes at their favourite Clarens—have, day and night, pursued you, for the sake of ascertaining how I could augment your pleasures, or diminish your poverty."

The Countess could endure no farther; again her attempt to reach the only door failed.

"Ida, did you ever love me?" inquired Emmersly, in an accent of calm collectedness.

"To what purpose should I confirm my present hate?" asked she.

"Your hate?—Nay, dear! Speak more blandly," continued Sir Brook, plainly perceiving her mind was busy in arranging some plan of escape.

" If this be love!" responded the powerless woman, " you have my perfect wishes—shall I name them?—I would my look could rend your thread of life, and send you quietly, traitor, to the judgment seat."

The wife of Estalles was too proud to shrink, and knowing that to yield was her only alternative, she sat despairingly waiting her guest's pleasure.

" Proceed, lady," said he, imitating her chilling tones.

" I saw you first, young sir, just as the repugnance of my heart began to lessen towards my projected union with Major Harris. Yes, welcome tears of dropping gall," continued Ida. " Your voice seduced me from my father's command. I was not very young, but love, false love, till then lay dormant in my bosom: it bloomed, perhaps, more passionately for its long nurturing.

" I loved—would that I could blot out the memory with your blood, as man to man

might do. In those bright hours I judged your actions by my own. My bosom held not a thought of harm to dissipate my unalloyed gladness. You would not allow my father to be informed of my reasons for breaking the engagement—it was our first domestic trial. Neither would you permit me to reveal our mutual attachment to him; and when we met, it was with cold formality; as I grew, the spell encircled my growth."

Sir Brook smiled malignantly — however, the power to annoy his captive had departed.

"I refused to fly with you, unless even a secret marriage first was consummated. Since that time what have I not felt of misery and distress? What has not Estalles suffered? I cannot speak the hatred burning within every recess of my stung spirit, though see how easily I describe the love which hath passed. This, then, shall decide how disproportionately great is my aversion. Now, leave me, sir. Obey, Emmersly," added she, perceiving

that her visitor rather composed himself than prepared to depart. "I see you intend to pursue your own inclination, Sir Brook, but as far as I am concerned, you must permit some impediments." The Countess attempted to reach the bell.

Her persecutor remarked the effort, and with intuitive apprehension, arrested her arm, muttering—

"Silly, ridiculous woman! Mark how frail you are."

"I am!" said she, in an agony of passion. "I am frail!" and by an unexpected jerk, her attenuated arm snapped within his hold. Sir Brook relinquished it in alarm—Madame Estalles fainted! her eyes opened no more from their glazed fixedness, to bear the knowledge of her tormentor's presence.

Life was spared for many weary months, when unskilful amputation finished the work so wantonly begun. The number of her days was told, and in certainty of approaching dis-

solution, Ida penned a few hurried words to her friends at Clarens, bidding them be speedy, and catch the parting breath of her repentant soul.

Mary Clairlowe insisted on accompanying Lady Belton, and happily arrived several days ere the young Countess's painful pilgrimage terminated.

The two ladies still lingered over the relics of the unfortunate Ida, when a ragged boy, thrusting a letter into Miss Clairlowe's hand, rushed abashed from the "great people," as they were called by the peasantry, and was out of sight instantly.

"TO LADY BELTON AND MISS CLAIRLOWE,

"Pardon, Madame and Mademoiselle, the intrusion of this epistle. My holy depth of gratitude will not be restrained—you tended my poor Ida well, may the God of our fathers reward you. Long months ago, I entered the Protestant church. I soothed and com-

forted my wife, and redoubled my thankfulness to Heaven for my own conversion. You knew me not again, in the priest's garb. Lady, I am changed. At that altar whence I took my bride, I felt my soul relax from the strong hold of Popery; and though my knee first bent clandestinely to my Father's throne, its homage hath outlived the world, its scandal, and its sorrows; my gladdened heart bends in humble adoration to Him, and in heartfelt thankfulness to your generous selves. These thoughts make all the riches on earth to your grateful—

"P. ESTALLES."

There was little remaining to detain poor Ida's visitors at ———. They hastened, therefore, to collect the small property of the dead; and carefully locking up the whole, despatched a messenger to the Count, begging him to take immediate possession thereof. Among

her papers the following letter was discovered:—

"When the first pause after your interment bids the conscience of survivors recall only the blest moments of their companionship with the departed—when only reminiscences of happiness come over one's heart, then Ida, my wife, I will remember thee. I have not been the 'guilty inventor of a tale,' of which your letters accuse me. I madly loved you—the serpent 'jealousy' tore my gentler thoughts from you.—Say, had I no cause? My child—our child, Ida, had been forgotten! You ruthlessly smiled upon my grief——did more—called me 'dupe,' and—but enough! We separated. I have watched you until now—would I had known the visitor had dared molest your solitude. I discovered this too late. Friends have been—still are, near you, Ida, who, from a chain of circumstances, are of more value to you

than your unworthy husband. They, I feel assured, will guard you from intruding visitors in future. I shall be near you when you die. Ay, more! I will pray to be with your spirit in its flight. Rely, my wife, on Him to whom we have appealed. Give one other mercy—thought to me. Then go, Ida—go to meet your God—your Redeemer! whose saving intercession will be yours. Go seek our babe, and when I enter Heaven's gates, let me see Ida and our child together; the sight will blot out all the past, but love.

"P. ESTALLES."

CHAPTER VII.

" She fails—she sinks—as dies the lamp,
In charnel airs, or cavern damp,
So quickly do his baleful sighs,
Quench all the sweet light of her eyes!"

PARADISE AND THE PERI.

" ——— 'Twas he
Gave heat unto the injury, which return'd
Like a petard ill lighted to the bosom
Of him who gave fire to it."

FAIR MAID OF THE INN.

WE left Lord Dentnoris alone, revelling in the delight of dreams, varying as the clouds above him—till, like them, vanquished by the summer sunshine—when, with a lightened spirit, he blithely quitted the gardens to join his better angel, Lady Wilverton.

"One word, Harold," said Aunt Marianne, meeting him; "there yet remains an hour and twenty minutes to seven—will you take this money, or as much of your own if you prefer it, and a message for me to a cottage close by? I must tell you, in the first place, that I was sent for in great haste this morning, to visit a poor woman who had just arrived from Ireland with her family, I imagine.

"At all events she is accompanied by a wretched trio, a man, woman, and child, making in the whole four, according to my computation; and the reason I speak so gladly about them is this—I made each squalid face look happier in the morning, you go and add to the cheerful work to-night."

"But why should not Wilson do this service for me?" inquired Dentnoris.

"Ever thus! Oh, it is ever thus! Ah, well, I see I must discover all my secret," said Lady Wilverton. "You must know, Harold, that the sick woman is Villiers—she who

brought the children to England—and has much information to reveal concerning your interests. I wish you would see her soon—she is certainly very ill."

"I will do your bidding immediately, though fain would I have enjoyed more selfish thoughts just now. Where lives this woman, and for whom should I inquire?"

"Good old Bradford has given them his only out-house; the cottage you know—then instead of going in at the door near the road, pass to the right. Good bye."

"Nellie!" shrieked a most unseemly heraldress, as Harold Dentnoris inquired for the sick person Lady Wilverton had that morning relieved. "Nellie, I say, you'll be in your best, I suppose, afore I lets in the big gentle as waits to see you?"

"No more! No, never more, O'Brien; desire Lord Dentnoris to walk in. I feel it can be no other gentleman who thus could brave the miseries around me, unless indeed he wear

a pastor's garb, and feels religion's law constrain him to act generously. Approach, my lord," continued she, "I have but scanty space for shrift."

The gentleness of the woman's address, her correct intonation and graceful movement, as she raised her arm, signifying a desire to be obeyed, formed a strange contrast to the careless combination of squalidness and misery settled on every part of the room, and the creatures within it.

"Be seated, my lord!" said the invalid; "I have more to communicate than my hours are sufficient for; yet till the burthen be removed, I must suffer pangs which, if patiently endured, may appease the wrath of an offended God. No prayer will come till shattered memory hath rest. Wine, Jane!—more wine! —more!" she ejaculated, as the wooden spoon was emptied, "more!" and for the eighth time a wretched nurse replenished the ladle, and again the wine was drained from its uninviting

deposit: then lifting her haggard countenance to Harold, she commenced a history of her life, motioning him to place his seat still nearer to the bed side.

"My father," said the unfortunate narrator, "was a hedger on the Wilverton estate. These people bear no connexion with me, more than this; that ruined man, the wretch you see in the corner, was a sailor on board the ship in which we left Calcutta, and faithfully discharged a trust, even to starvation—but of this hereafter. My mother died in giving me birth. A sister of my poor old father's brought me up, till I was of an age to undertake the care of our little cottage; poor, dear father, he was proud of me—he married as an old man—my mother, too, was forty, and consequently I was very precious to him, and every spare farthing was put by to afford me the harmless vanities of youth. I was one of Lady Wilverton's school, and there learned to read and write, perhaps too well; but I don't know.

My joy and comfort was in our frugal home, and when 'The Lady' used to praise its order and neatness, the clever mending of father's and my own clothes, my young heart bounded with gladness, and tears would trickle down the one dear old face, as he sat beside the well swept hearth, looking in transport at the moving lips, and speaking eyes, of our benefactress.

"Morning after morning, night after night, we knelt together at the log-table, and blessed the Lord who provided us such happiness. I loved my father and adored my God—I venerated 'the Lady,' and my old aunt's kindness was a continual theme—indeed I liked every one! Oh, how gleesomely I used to work a little with my needle, helping the housekeeper at the Abbey, when father did not know of it, and turn my earnings into a warm jacket or new shoes for him, or even a new plate or wooden spoon, as far as it would go,

and prepare the little surprise by the time he came home from hedging.

"Ah, my lord, does it not appear improbable that the guilty wretch before you could have been so pure? I am dying—believe, therefore, each word I utter. But to continue, nor waste the fleeting time.

"We went on in this way till my fourteenth year, when the spring dinner Lady Wilverton always gave the villagers, came round. The week before father bought me a blue print, almost, I thought, looking like 'the Lady's' silks. I showed it to Waynard, the Abbey housekeeper, who got it made for me, and 'the Lady's' maid gave me a little lace cap to wear with it, assisting my vanity to the very utmost.

"My father's voice warned me repeatedly ere I turned from consulting the sixpenny mirror; and when I joined him he looked so satisfied with my appearance, called me his

smart young Nellie, and hobbled off so gaily, that my silly self grew half bewildered with an intuitive importance.

" The feast was a merry one, though ' the Lady ' was not there; she staid at home, they said, for fear of increasing a sad cold. The laughter loving crowd at length were about to disperse, when I felt, rather than saw, a gentleman standing on the opposite side of the dance; his look was fixed on me; I blushed, intreated my father to leave, feeling frightened rather than flattered by the attention my new gown drew upon me, for my head was filled with the recollection of its silky appearance, and believing only the gentleman's astonishment proceeded from the same cause, hastened to move away.

" Notwithstanding the numerous village beaux who flocked around us both, father and I were very grave; albeit we listened to the topics of feasts and fun, and the settling of a party for May-day, and the decision to make

me its Queen. Father had his reasons for dissenting; however, it was given against him, and 'Nellie Ryder' was unanimously shouted by a boisterous chorus.

"We reached our comfortable room—father seemed disturbed—closed the door, and took his seat at the window. I went to put the Bible down before him, when he pulled me to his side, and in mournful accents exclaimed—'Nelly, give up being 'Queen of the May' this once; that lot don't suit a hedger's daughter—it's above ye!'—but I tire you, my lord?"

"Oh, no; I beg you speak on."

"I cried till my heart seemed breaking, and answered: 'Well, father, I don't mind, if you don't like me to take the place, I won't be Queen.'"

"'There's a dear good girl,' said father; but I cried on, feeling that my resignation of the expected honour would deprive me of a proud position in the village circle.

"The next day, in consequence, my cheek

was paler, and my father suddenly altered his opinion.

"I could not suppress my joy, for which my father thanked me, saying, 'the more glad you seem, Nellie, the more I know what you would have given up for my sake.'

"Alas, I was the Queen! A band of young girls, dressed in wreaths and white muslins, for which the 'Lady' always supplied the funds, walked behind me to the Bower. I wore no crown as yet; my auburn hair—see it now, my lord, white as driven snow, and yet I am not aged—fell in profusion over my bare and blanched shoulders.

I had been cherished from infancy—the hot sun had never bronzed my clear complexion—I heard the loud huzzas, the murmured praises, and at that moment, bending with an excess of excitement, I would willingly have changed my queenship with the meanest of my appointed vassals.

"My father was too proud of his child's

triumph to imagine her distress. On—on—went the merry throng; I was dragged and pushed by turns, until arriving at the May-pole, when I heard the voice of a lady, deputed by our Lady, who a second time was absent, proclaim me Queen of the day's revels—hoping that the morrow would teem with pleasant recollections, induced by order, sobriety, and merriment, unmingled by the common errors which sometimes occurred, and which ever brought with them contempt from man, and displeasure from God. 'Be happy and be wise,' said the speaker; 'and now, beautiful queen, the dance awaits you, and many a happy return of this sweet May season to you all.'

"It was a glad, a merry sight. I looked down as she bound the rosy wreath over my brow, and bid me wait one moment for my laurel sceptre. At length the coronation was completed, and I lifted up my eyes again—those grey eyes of the spring dinner threw their steadfast gaze upon me—I blushed, and,

too subdued to share my partner's mirth—he was a scion of a proud line, and—human too, proud, I quitted the string of dancers, and there, amid the noble spectators, for all the wealthy of the neighbourhood joined the favoured Mayings in those days, collected the mystic thoughts that second look had altogether unsettled.

"The Queen was to sing—'Oh, yes! Oh, yes!' was vociferated by the peasantry.

"'Do!' proceeded from a deep voice near; it was my partner, the young Earl C———. I sang an old ballad—my voice was rich and powerful—praises followed—a thousand things were vowed—other songs followed.

"My composure regained, I once more lifted my eyes from the ground, and met the stranger's unchanged admiration. I fancied every mysterious thing.

"He spoke not to those around, and I began to imagine the figure one of the great lord's ghosts seen in ruins, Mrs. Waynard

having lent me several of Mrs. Radcliffe's works.

"Whoever he might be, I frightened myself into a fever of conjecture, and started with a half-suppressed shriek, when a hand lightly touched me on the shoulder. The surprise was, however, most agreeable.

"The mother of the Earl had come to make an offering to 'the Queen of May.' 'Here, young queen,' said she, 'I am to reward you for your song, and request a favour for my son —will you have this?' added the lady; throwing a pretty chain of gold over my neck—'I have nothing more suited for you here.'

"For several moments I resisted the idea of retaining it; however, finding my efforts to return it perfectly unavailing, I begged to be allowed to do everything I could for the kind lady. 'Indeed,' replied she, 'it is not to me that thanks are due—Lord C———, my son, has bestowed it simply by way of bribe; and this is to be the guerdon for the gift. On

Monday next that lovely creature,' added she, pointing to an elegant girl at the entrance of the bower, 'is to become his wife; will you dance with the servants at her wedding?'

"I could scarcely find language to reply, beyond asserting the fact, that my father was only a hedger.

"'Oh, he must come, too,' said the Earl, hastily—in another moment he was gone.

"At nine o'clock my father bade me break up the revels. This I did, according to custom; and we sought our home, followed by a band of girls, as before, lighted by a brilliant moon. 'God save the Queen' was chaunted at our door; good nights were said, and 'May-day' ended.

"As the door closed on its creaking hinges, my father desired me, with austerity never before assumed towards his darling, to be quick and change my flaunting gear, for the honest russet becoming a hedger's daughter. 'Never again,' said he, 'shall you have those

fierce grey wicked eyes fixed on you so boldly, for all the world as though you were his puppet-show.'

"I started; turned to leave the room—why did I then wish he had not seen them—how heedless we ever are of Heaven's warnings.

"My movement displayed the neck-chain—with a desperate effort my parent sprang towards me: 'Nellie,' exclaimed he, 'where, in the name of our great God, did you get that chain?' My heart leaped, I could not reply—my hesitation increased his alarm.

"'Speak?' cried my poor father; 'say how you came by it, ay, even should the truth blast my doating heart.'

"Had his life depended on a reply, my parched lips would have remained immoveable; the possession of the chain I felt to be a compliment; but the old man's frown, the frantic motion of his form, distended eye, and clenched hand, the other grasping me with wild energy,

frightened my spirit, and I sank on our only chair powerless and stupified.

"My father spoke not; moments elapsed, and then he knelt down to pray for the Lord's mercy to his weak orphan.

"Tears came to my relief; and oh! could I live again those two succeeding hours, methinks I would leave this world in peace and hope, with God and man.

"I told him all! I had no need for concealment—happy thought—he blessed and kissed me—bade me change my garments, after which, in quiet comfort we sat down to our Bible. He did not perceive my frequent inattention; that first exaltation rooted every seed of goodness from my soul.

"The memory of May-day was frequently revived, till the wedding day of the young earl. Mrs. Waynard begged me to step up to the Abbey to be dressed. Father trusted me to the housekeeper's charge. Lady Wilverton was on a visit to Mr. Beverley Dentnoris.

At four o'clock I started with my bundle; after crossing the copse, I turned to the shaded oak seat to rest myself, thinking that, as I could see nobody, nobody could see me. A gentleman approached; and, still fancying I was unperceived myself, I remained motionless. He stopped. I scarcely breathed, hoping he would pass on. Contrary to my expectations, he remained, murmuring to himself, at intervals, 'that sweet young creature, Queen of the May —why cannot I forget her? a peasant's child, a boor's, a hedger's! Silly heart, be still! I vow I love the child.' It was the last sentence, uttered in a deep low tone of pathos, my husband—nay, start not, my lord—knew so well how to assume at times. He turned round; the blaze of those grey eyes were upon me; in the confusion of the moment I moved to quit the spot; I felt abashed at being deemed an 'eavesdropper'—I feared to show my burning face; forcing my trembling knees to do their duty, I seized my bundle, and attempted to

run; even in my distress I read his gaze of admiration, and dreaded to repeat my look towards the place where he still stood, lest it might appear a sign for him to join me. Onward I walked, till at length a turning hid me from his view, and I gladly hailed the respite to my hurried pace, to recover my ruffled spirits, in case I should meet any one from the Abbey, and there was yet nearly a mile before me. A gentle step soon overtook me, followed by words indelibly engraven on my memory.

"'Did my sudden appearance terrify you, damsel?' inquired the gentleman; 'if so, your swain shall quickly dispel the blushes he has caused, by taking leave of you at once.' His manner indicated a question rather than a resolve. 'Good bye, dear pretty one!' he continued; 'do learn to hate my presence less; by-bye, dear trembler.' I saw him turn away, heard the clattering of carriage wheels, and sighed. I understood not my own emotions—where he left me, there I remained.

"His words were unintelligible to me separately, but, expressed as he expressed them, I treasured them above all other records. Five o'clock struck on my ear like a reproachful knell, and I hurried forward. Mrs. Waynard was alarmed at my late coming, and most delightful were the scoldings I received.

"Early the next morning we started for the 'great house.' My toilet was completed in 'the Lady's' own room, and certainly the glass confirmed the many voices of applause around me; but the effrontery of vulgar pride had not been acquired, and the alternate suffusions left a ruddier glow upon my cheek and neck than Waynard considered becoming for the part I had to perform, and in consequence came happily to my relief. The gala dresses astonished me. I was appointed to head a train of girls strewing roses before the footsteps of the bride; to enhance the effect, a rich gauze veil encompassed my person. The clock struck nine. Oh that summer morning, how heavenly it was.

"The children, with their flower baskets, were arranged on either side the steps of the great entrance; the pathway to the carriage was lined with peasantry, they having intreated their beloved young lady to walk thus far, and give them the opportunity to cheer her in their own fashion, and many indeed were the demonstrations of joy and fervent gratitude.

"The mother of the bride beckoned me to her, bidding me walk before her graceful daughter. The slight form of Miss G. then appeared, leaning on her proud father's arm. I preceded them, with a beating heart, strewing rose leaves in their way, while shouts and blessings made music as they walked along. My veil shrouded the new won bride as she entered the carriage.

"It drove away, others followed, and then our light and happy steps bounded over the green sward to join the breakfast preparations. Whispers there were that day that I was a

forward wench, and no good would come of it. Evening came, when, tired and exhausted, I begged Mrs. Waynard to leave early, or send me home by any cart going our way. 'Dear me!' she exclaimed, 'why, we are hardly begun the fun. No, I can't go home just yet; but if you are so tired, and you do look pale to be sure, I'll put you in a snug corner enough, where no dew can reach, and if you like you may sleep there till I am ready.' We sauntered through the long paths until any farther progress was impeded by a small wicket gate. 'Can you climb?' said Waynard, addressing me; 'it seems the gate is locked, but you'll be all the safer for it; and, though we have come a roundabout way, you are close to the kitchen windows, you see.

" 'Go to the right,' said Waynard, 'and you will find a comfortable summer house, where many a squire has had a night's rest before you.'

" 'Thank you,' said I, having discovered

the retreat, scantily, yet, I thought at that time, handsomely furnished; a red damask couch, curtains of the same colour, a small round table, and four chairs, book-shelf, and writing-table, completed the list of articles contained in that fatal resting-place.

"I was soon asleep. An indefinite knowledge of a person being near me interrupted my repose; and can human thought conceive my unutterable consternation, when I waked, to find the large and penetrating eyes again fixed on me.

"'She fears me still,' whispered my unknown companion; 'I must begone.'

"'I am afraid I have made some mistake, sir,' I replied.

"'No, no! you are indeed welcome to share this room. But are you going?' asked the gentleman, observing my intention to depart. 'Pray, lie down again,' said he, opposing the movement; 'I will hide should any one approach.' The full assurance of wrong im-

pressed me; yet I could not make the effort to rise again. I knew my tacit acquiescence would be misappreciated; yet how oppose him more? I strove to leave the sofa. 'Sir, I would rather go home,' I said.

"'Home, dear?' asked the same appealing tones. 'Well, let me take you home.'

"'Oh no, sir, I must wait for Mrs. Waynard; it is too great a distance to walk.'

"'No, child, of course you cannot walk—I will drive you.' 'Tell Mrs. Waynard I am going, then,' said I, willing to escape on any terms, having not the slightest idea of accepting the stranger's proposal. 'I would not think of taking you from her charge,' observed he, 'without obtaining her consent to the transfer.'

"In an instant he was gone. I felt immensely relieved, and, catching up my shawl, rushed to the door—it was locked; to the windows—they were barred outside; in despair, I stood still pushing at the shutter, when my acquaintance suddenly re-appeared. I was faint

with dread, and other fierce emotions new and unaccountable. The gentleman brought wine with him; after much solicitation I took a draught, assured by him that it would give me strength for my journey, for I was then a delicate slight girl. I told you my lord that. Of that wine I drank—a fall, a struggle, was all I remembered.

"Can you listen to me still, dear sir—the horrors of my tale have yet to come?" asked the dying woman.

"I can listen, but fear it exhausts you too much. Had you not better reveal these secrets to some kind pastor, who will lead you to perceive the wonderful mercy still in store for your distressed mind? Do, I beseech you," continued he, "let me send for some one?"

"Lord Dentnoris," replied Nellie, "I have that to say which concerns you; but to understand the character of a man once your friend ——"

"My friend ——!"

"Interrupt me no more," said the woman,

sternly. "Bring wine, O'Brien. It is necessary I should weary your patience thus. For a dying creature's sake hear me, I implore you; think you I can see my Judge face to face, with all these burdens on my soul? Oh, let me tell them!"

"Speak on, I beg you, but calm yourself," said Harold.

"Day broke; I looked upon it. I had wakened from a busy dream of gay illumined halls, glad voices, and one tight caress. Was it my father who thus pressed me to his bosom? No. Then who could it have been? The stranger? Yes! My face and forehead crimsoned with shame; but repinings all were useless — I found myself in a comfortable château—an actress for my governess. I wept continually for my father. I had as well been dumb—none commiserated me. The stranger came not; years passed by. At last I was considered sufficiently accomplished to be set more at liberty. What kept my soul on earth Heaven only knows, for then deep grief

seemed consuming me. Had sorrow killed my father?—the thought haunted me night and day. Had Waynard purposely betrayed me? Alas! I could have no question answered, no harrowing thought replied to.

"It was brilliant summer again, my lord, when I saw the inmates of our cottage dressed and going forth, as if to some grand gala.—They were gone. Another moment I was wandering from room to room.—A portrait lay on the table; it was too true a likeness to mistake it—it was the portrait of your beautiful aunt, Lord Dentnoris!"

Harold started—a presentiment that Brook Emmersly was the hero of the woman's tale struck forcibly upon his mind, but as immediately dispelled, as too unjust, too suspicious.

"My eyes then rested on a miniature case," continued the wretched speaker; "curiosity induced me to open it.—The grey eyes were there! I dropped the case and shivered the glass into atoms. To repair the mischief was

impossible—I closed the uninjured casket, and stole on tip-toe to my rooms again, taking with me the fragments, and after depositing them, renewed my survey. A portfolio was my next attraction.—A masterly sketch of the summer house scene was presented to me, and beneath it, written in his own hand—dare I tell you, my lord?"

"Yes, speak; I am too anxious to ascertain the name," said Harold.

"'Sir Brook and Lady Emmersly!' Well you may shrink in horror at my tale—few know the extent of his wickedness, Lord Dentnoris. We met, and were married the next morning! For several months we lived in uninterrupted harmony; still the grief for my father burnt within me. I had not seen Sir Brook for months. At the period of our marriage his father lived—the title beneath the picture was placed there in anticipation of his parent's death."

Harold shuddered.

"Curiosity again impelled me, and one morning I determined to ascertain whether or not my husband had taken with him some few things I knew he valued—he had, and I felt desolate. My child was born, and then I determined to seek my father's home once more. The villagers repulsed me! Young faces laughed within my old home. I asked for the old man's grave—they pointed to the spot, and mercifully stayed their curses, for his unforgotten sake. My weary soul turned from the hallowed neighbourhood! to silence and to Heaven I left the grave—longing to be its tenant also."

Sobs interrupted the narrative. Harold gazed on the mute features before him, fearing that the soul had taken flight, but the lifted lash soon relieved this apprehension, and he bent his head, at the sufferer's sign, to catch the sounds of the failing voice.

"I then sought Lady Wilverton," continued the woman, "never dreaming that my betrayer

was her young favourite, of whom I heard no one speak highly. The 'Lady' God had removed from me. I wandered to Italy, in the service of one at whose house Mr. Emmersly dined. I had previously taught my boy to say 'Father.' It was a holy sound to me. My then mistress was fond of the child, and took him with her own children more frequently than not, in the carriage. It happened that on one of these expeditions the children were chattering to Sir Brook, when his own accents seemed echoed from an infantile voice. He was attracted, smiled at our offspring, who, glad to be recognised kindly, looked into Emmersly's face, lisping 'Father.'"

"The parent started. My mistress involuntarily drew back; an inquiry was made—disclosures took place. The lady supported my right, requesting me to show her a certificate of marriage. Alas! I had it not. Whirled as I was through an iniquitous scheme to the altar, little my guileless heart conceived of

harm, or necessity for precaution. My husband was appealed to; mark the result—that night my baby and myself fled from our kind protectress. Wily as ever, Emmersly gained admittance to my chamber—his arguments overcame me, and with his assistance, and the connivance of the porter, we were beguiled to a distant home. Aye, despite his former cruelty, I helped to cheer his assumed despondent contrition.

"Emmersly was subject to fits of madness, and at times would terrify me exceedingly—he refused also to give me the certificate. 'I will take you to England, if you please, but not declare our union—Brook Emmersly's union with a hedger's daughter!' he ejaculated sarcastically.

"The mild clear moon beamed over us, as we sat on the deck of the vessel, bearing us, I believed, to a happier country — England. Emmersly rose to walk; I followed him, and

dared once again to renew the subject of our marriage. Angry words ensued—'Well, if you will not reveal it, I will,' said I, impetuously; 'and to your beautiful Lady Wilverton the first explanation shall be given.' The insane gaze he turned upon me, the quivering of his pale passion-revealing lip, haunt me to this dreary time. Yet I must be calm; I have still harrowing records to recite: 'And the child's legitimacy?' said he. 'What have I to say, Emmersly, except that he is your son? And I think his father should gladly covet the title.' 'Oh,' replied he again with the same biting scorn. The next moment he caressed our boy.

"Bring me wine, O'Brien," shrieked the miserable mother; "wine, for the love of mercy, or his infamy will perish in this trembling frame. I am better now. Make haste to hear me. Nay, no sign to temporize my grief. Have I not gnawed my tongue, and gnashed

my teeth with anguish; have I not done all but hang my husband? I could not do that—he was the father of my child!"

Here the speaker ceased—hot wasting tears coursed her withered cheek, and calmed the turbulence of her despair.

"I sat listlessly gazing on the sparkling waters, when a faint scream, a splash, struck an icy truth deep into my soul. My boy had perished!" screamed the dying mother, and with a wailing moan sank back upon her pillow.

"Come again," intreated poor Nellie. "Come close to my side again, Lord Dentnoris—I have little more to say."

"Yet why not spend your precious moments peacefully?" said the alarmed and horrified Dentnoris.

"Ah! no peace for me until my history be completed. When I recovered from my couch of sickness, I found myself in India; the burning sun of noonday blazed through the venetians of my bungalow; a native lay on a rug

near the door—the scene alarmed me. Some time elapsed before the Hindoo, in broken English, made me comprehend my situation, and the circumstances attending my illness. 'You master com two tree months; me live wid you, me pay for you, and do ebeleting for ma'am,' was the sum of his discourse. I asked for Mr. Emmersly. 'He find me where ship anchor; ma'am not got sense, so master say; no use me com, he stay; so master send Munoo to tak care ma'am, he com Indy by bye—send ma'am first to wait.'

"Day after day, month after month passed; Brook Emmersly came not. He had never allowed me to adopt his name, since our second re-union—even my child—Oh!" groaned the woman—"even he was called Ryder—I meant it should be his Christian name. Again I inquired from my Hindoo attendant, 'When will my husband come?' the man smiled most provokingly. 'No, ma'am, me understand—gentleman com to him's ma'am soon.' My health

at length became perfectly re-established; I sent a note to the chaplain of the little church I had wished to attend; but the pertinacity of the old Hindoo opposed my repeated attempt to leave the precincts of our dwelling; it happened, however, that by a chance, and the indulgence of mutual curiosity, I saw the creature's wife; hag as she was, I enlisted her good services by petty bribes, and secretly despatched my note to the Rev. P. D.; he recommended my accepting the charge of two children to England, whose father had just committed suicide."

Harold gasped—"False, false," he exclaimed.

"Oh, wait," entreated Nellie; "I wished to make you feel the horrible imputation; believe it not, Lord Dentnoris: your father died by God's own will; your brother told me, sweet boy, that papa had been praying all night and all day, and in the act of rising from prayer had knocked the table where the pistols lay—the pistols he was about to

present to the captain of the vessel in which the children sailed. I have them, the box, and the note, overlooked by my wicked husband, who wished, by every possible means, either to criminate the memory of your father, or leave it in doubtful mystery, equally as painful to the survivors. I have, moreover, the conclusion of the paper, signed by General R., who is since dead; that sent home by Sir Brook was a half sheet, begun and quitted for its incomprehensibility; the real will was entrusted to my care by Lord Dentnoris's own man. But how could I discover the wickedness of my husband? I have your father's diary, my lord. To my care the man committed money, jewels, and the dead lady's wardrobe; the diamonds were to be my most especial care; they all are safe—thanks to that man," said she, pointing to the wretch before alluded to. "Lorn!" screamed Nellie; the man turned a vacant stare towards her, and dropped his unintelligent eyes to the floor again.

"If you are able to continue, I shall feel most grateful to hear where my treasures are deposited?"

"I am able, but unwilling to make the painful, the humiliating confession labouring within my breast: it must be told. More wine, O'Brien? Shall I, thus guilty, thus abject, look for peace? However, to my story," said she, in a louder tone. "I assumed the name of Villiers, and brought the children to England; ask them how I tended them; never from a soul would I permit them to hear aught to pollute their purity—they, oh! yes, they loved Villiers. Once I spoke in the presence of my husband; I saw his grey eye dilate with astonishment at the memory of the sound; my tanned complexion and hollow cheek, the spectacles I wore, and the loss of my once beautiful teeth—the greyness of my hair—deceived him. He looked satisfied, and his wife passed on."

The tone of the reciter grew harsher as she proceeded, as if so much misery had unstrung it.

"Immediately after yielding the orphans to your uncle, I hastened to Mr. Arthur's, hoping, from his intimacy with Brook Emmersly, to discover some clue to my marriage certificate. My beauty attracted the admiration of the 'Humpback,' and I remained with him—forgetting that in Lorn's charge was so much of real value—I had no need of money. Lorn has proved himself too good a Christian to have thus been intrusted with dishonestly acquired treasures; he refused to quit the trust, and, though years have gone by, he still watches them by night and day; the occupation ruined him, he wasted; by accident—one of those providential occurrences which puzzle sinful wretches—I discovered Lorn O'Brien's family; they directed me how to find himself, and on the return of the vessel, the other day, Lorn O'Brien came on shore, rejected by the captain as an insane person, hoarding imaginary treasures; there he sits—look upon him, Lord Dentnoris, and drag him from his dreadful

insensibility; he sits upon the trunk containing your property. While I remained the pampered slave of Mr. Arthur, he made me his confidante, and though you will hardly credit my assertion, it was Emmersly instigated him to establish claims on the heirship—supposing no papers existed. Willing to frustrate my husband's schemes, I longed to discover the whereabouts of my trusty Lorn; of course I was unsuccessful, till accident, or rather Providence, assisted me. I came too late; you had already been reinstated; illness detained me two years after Lorn's return. I see it now — Providence — the Almighty, chose not that such an agent should forward the work of justice.

"One day I found in Mr. Arthur's escritoire a few torn fragments, bearing, I fancied, a resemblance to the marriage certificate my kind mistress, of whom I spoke previously, had shown me, in order that I might at any time be able to distinguish my own, should chance

afford me the opportunity of looking through Emmersly's papers. I pasted each piece on white paper, and after considerable patience discovered the duplicate of your own parents' marriage proof—this I have also."

"God be praised," ejaculated her thankful listener.

"The first night we came to Landsworth, I met Sir Brook—a shriek betrayed me; but Lorn was nigh—honest Lorn—and I quailed no more to meet my husband's glancing eye. He spoke to me, even kindly. I drew back, my soul revolted, my energies became invigorated in proportion to my disgust; a sudden impulse forced this attenuated arm to strike him; he looked but once—remounted his horse, and has, I trust, for ever left my sight. Now, good night!" said the half-dead woman—"these people tell me Brook is mad."

The sunken lids fell over eyes more glazed and dull than even death could make them.

"Think now of rest, I beseech you," said

Harold, "and of those treasures which lie in Heaven for you."

The suffering woman raised her thin hand, indicating her desire to be alone; and Harold Dentnoris again trod over the threshold of the comfortless habitation.

A few days, and the little barn was tenantless. Nellie Ryder lay at peace beneath her humble grave mound; Lorn O'Brien and his family were comfortably provided for; the hidden mysteries of Lord Dentnoris's life disclosed, and Harold's title perfected.

CHAPTER VIII.

So fathomless, so full of gloom,
No eye could pierce the void between;
It seemed a place where gholes might come
With their foul banquets from the tomb,
And in its caverns feed unseen.

LALLA ROOKH.

Cleomenes.

Do as the Heavens have done; forget your evil;
With them—forgive yourself.

Paulina.

True, too true, my lord.
If, one by one, you wedded all the world,
Or, from the all that are, took something good,
To make a perfect woman; she you killed
Would be unparallel'd.

WINTER'S TALE.

THE evening was oppressive, and the gorgeous sun boastingly seemed to defy all nature, by declining more slowly than usual behind the forest of A——. At length he was obscured,

indignant clouds flashed forth their rival light, thunder boomed around; a sudden stroke of the electric fluid startled the horses, and, ere thought would come, Miss Clairlowe was precipitated, through the door of the carriage, which sprung open, into the abyss beneath—then one dash, one desperate struggle, and the machine fell back upon the cliff's steep side.

Not even a whispered moan could be heard amid the strife of elements, to direct their search. The chasm banks were overgrown with brier and brushwood, while here and there a sharp projecting ridge held a huge fir, or root of the graceful linden tree. In the horrible blackness nothing was discernible, and every idea of where the lovely girl lay in the stagnant pool below was denied them. Clouds thickened over the frowning vault, and the dark vapoury mist swept up in still grandeur from the grave of their beloved companion.

Every limb seemed paralysed with intense horror. Sir William quickly recovered himself,

gazed an instant into the sable hollow, then, hastily bidding his mother be comforted, descended the palpable declivity. "Miss Clairlowe" a thousand times reverberated through the steamy shades; no voice returned his call, save the fiend-like tone of the cavern's dull echo! With maddening vehemence he hallooed more loudly, "Mary, Mary!" No reply. The deadness of once creative nature alone answered him.

The increasing noxiousness of the exhalations, as the murky depth fell into heavier shadow before him, almost exhausted hope. Myriads of insects danced, and stung the disturber of their abodes; reptiles trailed their slimy pathways before his horrified perception. Again he madly vociferated, "Mary! oh, Mary! Great God! stir but one human sound to answer me, in this murky tomb, I beseech you!" said Sir William, swinging to and fro, unable to lodge his weary feet.

"Am I to die in a fruitless pursuit, or wilt

thou, O Father of Heaven, hear my prayer, and to my heart deliver her in safety?" Sir William's hand relaxed its hold—he fell, vainly attempting to secure a stronger branch. An old trunk now renewed his courage; he sprang to it, and on its branch discovered what he supposed must be Miss Clairlowe's shawl—the darkness and his own anxiety preventing the possibility of inspecting it a second time. "She must have fallen past this spot." Oh agony! and once again the ancient root gave way—over and over he rolled, the old tree preceded him, and its dash into the misty deep was all his whirling senses could distinguish. Again and again Sir William clutched the frail weeds—all in vain; deeper he slipped into the phantom waste, then down to the abyss, whence none but God could rescue him.

The ravine widened towards its gleaming depth, and his only chance of safety appeared in the immediate re-ascent. "Yet no! Out on the devil who could teach me such a means of

safety, assured as I am that Miss Clairlowe rests in this black gloom. No! for Marianne's sake I will restore her favourite, or die," thought Sir William. The momentary pause invigorated him, and away, once more, he went over the repulsive pool; a new difficulty presented itself on reaching an overhanging projection.

The moon's blessed light began to shine upon his dark haunts, when, on the ground perpendicularly below, the silvery beams glanced merrily upon a bracelet. Away he sprung in frantic gladness—the thick sod splashed under his tread, when, looking round, he saw green snakes at play—one larger than the rest evidently sought greater sport, as he alternately raised his head, then darted onwards, manifesting haste and fear in reaching the opposite corner. A vivid glance sufficed to exhibit its object.

Strange energy overtakes us when despair impels, and thence Sir William Belton borrowed

his wonderful presence of mind in that engrossing moment. The body of Mary Clairlowe lay on the spot whence the reptile's attraction proceeded. The twisting monster recoiled a second, raised its long body in the noxious air —erect it poised in green glistening lustre, then swept its bright length over the slimy soil, upturned once more, and, hissing loudly, darted to the form of the inanimate girl. A scarcely perceptible rising in the sullen water diverted the creature from its intention. Sir William, on the first impulse, had rushed onward to guard the intended victim, but, as he approached, an indescribable instinct dictated a safer course, and, by alarming the timid reptile, successfully drove him from his prey.

When Mary Clairlowe opened her eyes, recalled to animation by her kind rescuer, a moment of rending intelligence succeeded.

She had ceased to look upon the horrors surrounding her, more in dread than actual inanimation. They who have experienced

such a feeling alone can appreciate her unutterable joy on meeting the friendly orbs of her travelling companion, or conceive her sensations, when, after the conflict between alarm and prayer, her ears greeted the sounds of human kindliness—with the memory of a home and its enjoyments rushing through the channel that one instant preceding had been o'erburthened with its vast despair;—not even they who have experienced it can describe the exquisite brimful gladness of the soul at such a moment.

An arduous trial yet awaited Sir William —Mary was near him, but not in safety.

"Use your eyes, if possible, dear Miss Clairlowe, and these creatures will fly from their gentle beams, while my strength shall bear you up these rugged steeps," said her deliverer.

Continued movements had roused the uncounted tenants of that drear confine, and the terrible host glided in wild disorder around them.

"This cannot last," said Sir William; and, quickly hastening with his burthen through the mist, commenced the frightful ascent. A few yards above them their grateful eyes beheld several figures—stray passers, and his own men, who had followed him more cautiously than his tremendous anxiety could allow.

One more hour, and Miss Clairlowe heard the voice of Lady Belton thanking and blessing the name of the Most High.

Our party were returning from their visit to the unfortunate Madame Estalles, when at the little village of L——, a letter from the widowed Count intreated them to rest at his friend Madame Cuvier's, and be the generous means of saving her daughter from an alliance as dangerous as profane. They were within a short distance of her dwelling at the period of the dangerous catastrophe just related, and accordingly resolved to hasten there without loss of time.

The magnificent domain of Madame Cuvier afforded a happy asylum to the weary travellers; its mistress, a pretty Frenchwoman, was a distant relative of Estalles.

"I must really apologize for this intrusion," said Lady Belton; "but your relation lent a deaf ear to my scruples, and insisted on our hazarding a welcome from entire strangers."

"The Count was right," returned Madame Cuvier; "and as soon as the sleepy eyelids of my domestics will it so, you shall be made at ease and comfortable, I trust. In the meantime, ladies, rest you here. Midnight slumbers have long since passed—I fear my retainers are more dull than ordinary on this festal morning." Saying this, the happy looking Frenchwoman bustled away, leaving our weary travellers in the half-light of early dawn.

"We cannot start till ten o'clock," exclaimed Sir William, returning from a survey of the broken wheel; "a mechanic has been

sent for, and the fracture will occupy some time in repairing."

"Indeed; then, I suppose, we must submit to be present at this premature wedding, of which the poor Count entertains such fear," replied Mary.

"His own marriage has prejudiced him," rejoined Lady Belton; "Madame Cuvier understands her daughter's choice better than we possibly can."

"How thankful I am to you, Sir William," at last said Miss Clairlowe; "from what perils you rescued me—how very grateful I am," said the beautiful girl, taking the reluctant hand of her preserver, "to God and to you, for all you endured for my poor sake!"

"Name it not, Miss Clairlowe—my joy has equalled yours; my anguish being perhaps as great, I look forward to a kindlier look from one, and beaming smiles from Colonel and Mrs. Clairlowe on our rejoining them." Sir William alluded to Harold Dentnoris; for some cause

he avoided the mention of his old companion's name. Mary blushed, and as her son still held the tiny hand in his, Lady Belton imagined her emotion arose from the captivity of those five small fingers.

"Well, let us rejoice, my dears; I am quite sure that little hand must be tired of your caresses, William." The truthful observation startled Sir William, who, for the beloved of Harold, could not bear the thought that even his mother should imagine any action of his attributable to gallantry, more than in brotherly affection.

Mary continued silent — she appreciated both parent and son. The *brusquerie* of the former frequently perplexed her; while the genuine candour, the principles, and high-mindedness of the latter, awakened no fear of his kind guardianship.

Our trio were musing in complacent quiet, when the busy Madame re-entered, to beg they would take possession of two small dor-

mitories. Mary had already slept on the couch at Lady Belton's side.

"Telling the truth," added the sharp voice of their gay hostess, "my Toinette will be a bride to-day—and guests fill up my more spacious rooms—I am a widow! Toinette is my only child. You have not seen her—she is a charming girl. You will witness the nuptials; I read in your countenance a negative—yet will I not despair."

"I fear we cannot enjoy the pleasure," observed Lady Belton; "it was but yesterday we left the dead Countess of your friend."

"Ah!" interrupted Madame Cuvier, "is she really dead—absolutely interred?"

"Too truly!" answered the guest.

"Say not 'too truly,' lady; better for herself, better for her husband, for us, for all, that her spirit is at rest. She has made a heretic of the unfortunate Count. Ah! is she dead—absolutely gone? Estalles may return to his forsaken creed, perhaps. Elegant Estalles!"

"Thus, you see, we cannot be present at your gaieties," added Lady Belton.

"Not so, lady—not so!—indeed I will not hear the ugly No!"

The confusion and bustle attending a fête of one hundred and fifty people, comprising every dialect within the boundaries of France and Italy, entirely prevented the remotest idea of repose, and kept our travellers unwilling listeners to the singing, talking, and tumultuous glee of the servitors.

The ladies therefore rose from their beds, and in self-defence attempted to mingle in the din.

They had scarcely arrived at this wise conclusion, when a knock at the door, answered by "Come in!" introduced a welcome but early visitor. Sir William's countenance betrayed strong emotion; he however suppressed it, and kindly inquired of the sleepy girl, if she had found it possible to repeat her nap?

"I fear not," continued he; "this pale face

looks sadly weary still," and again the little hand was locked in both his own.

"Well, well!" said the old lady, "I think, William, that the hand you admire so excessively, may as well be drawn within your arm; or is the secret your face portended too important for my little girl's consideration?"

"I knew my surprise would manifest itself before I could have time to explain its source," remarked her son. "I want you to see the bridegroom."

"He is not Harold Dentnoris—is he?" was the malapropos inquiry of Lady Belton.

"Decidedly not."

"Then we cannot care much about it. But," exclaimed Lady Belton, "who do I see!—surely that wretch is not to be Toinette's husband?"

"Too certainly. Do you perceive his badge?—the custom of this village obliges him to wear it."

"I will prevent the marriage," said the kind old lady.

"How can you, dear mother? What authority have you?" asked Sir William.

"Sweet victim! Poor Estalles!" sighed Mary Clairlowe. "Alas, can we not try to save her! Madame Cuvier told me, her charming daughter's betrothed was wealthy, good, and noble. How pretty—how childlike she is! Oh, try to save her!"

It was finally determined that a letter should explain to Madame Cuvier the reasons for their precipitate retreat. "If anything can save the sweet child, surely this warning shall," added Lady Belton, closing the billet. Yet was there no need for such unhappy tidings to the disconsolate widow—Sir Brook and his bride were both sought amid the laughing crowd, long and unsuccessfully.

CHAPTER IX.

"That evening, trusting that his soul
Might be from haunting love releas'd,
By mirth, by music, and the bowl,
Th' imperial Selim held a feast
In his magnificent Shalimar;
In whose saloons, when the first star
Of evening o'er the waters trembled,
The valley's loveliest all assembled."

MOORE.

THE halls of Loder Castle had seldom been more brightly illuminated than on the occasion of Mr. Loder's triumphant election for the County of ————. The idea of adopting the tendered intreaty to stand against several competitors, emanated from his mother's anxiety to divert his thoughts as much

as possible from the remembrance of a disappointment, sad as it was unanticipated—the decided rejection of his suit by Miss Clairlowe.

The old lady prided herself not a little, as she witnessed the successive, though reckless gallantries of her usually taciturn son.

"Happy to see you—happy to see you!—hope the loss of that fine animal has not hurt your race-plans much, L——; an extraordinary thing that! Quite right to question it deeply! No scrutiny will ever unravel the mischief, though!—bad system of betting, that! Ascot is not what it was! Some say improved!—true!—yet, no, no—don't think it! I wonder who will turn out clear! Something about the age of the horse 'twas, I fancy. Sad mess—bad job!" and without waiting a reply, the goodnatured, loquacious Lord of Castle Loder wandered on, through mazy circles of the great and gay, giving kind words to some, and smiles of warm welcome to the rest.

"Harold Dentnoris! by all that charms us!" exclaimed Lady Delvor. "Why, my dearest lord, where have you hidden yourself this long and weary while?"

"In your memory, I hope, Lady Delvor!" replied the gentleman addressed.

"Yes, that of course; but the matter of fact, 'where' the actual terrestriality of your abode, is what I now inquire for. My heart, the whole world knows, is so filled up with will-o'-wisps, it seldom condescends to ask for mortal destinations, save when I have an end to gain, or wish to benefit by the information. I am a whirlpool in affairs of taste; and should you have been roaming where you ought not to have been, I will curl away like vapour, and avoid ye. Apropos of vapours—allow me to introduce Mr. Ichell."

Lady Delvor was almost instantly led to the waltz, when the younger gentleman, determined to maintain the position of acquaintance with a man so immensely popular, in

which his splendid friend had placed him, broke the silence by endeavouring to recal the exact period and place where he had enjoyed the pleasure of a prior introduction to the then Mr. Dentnoris.

"In Italy, somewhere, surely it was!"

A slight movement of surprise followed the observation, as the young lord listened to an idea that re-awakened a thousand clear remembrances.

"Indeed!" he answered; "then you most probably are acquainted with my friends there?"

"Yes," added Ichell; "I knew a few of those you appeared to count among that number—Ida Estalles and Colonel Clairlowe's family—I should like to discover the Countess' retreat: Sir Brook Emmersly told me she had become Lady Abbess at Ursula, but it was wholly a false report."

"She is in a far happier resting place!" said Harold.

"Say where?" ejaculated the boy-lover.

"Where! Have you not heard of her death?"

"Death! and Ida! No! I had not, indeed, heard the fatal intelligence—poor Ida—she is at rest now! What made them both wretched? She so beautiful and high-minded, Estalles such a perfectly good-hearted fellow, and exquisitely gentlemanlike. Ah, well! My regiment and Clairlowe's have been so constantly stationed together, that we are sworn companions—I heard from him yesterday."

"They are all well, I trust?" asked Lord Dentnoris.

"Well! quite well, with one exception; his sister, it appears, is suffering from debility, caused by over exertion; he did not say much about any one else, and domestic economy has no charm for me."

"Stay!" said a gentleman near, interrupt-

ing the conversation. "For pity's sake tell me who that profile appertaineth to—

> 'O'er-picturing that Venus, where we see,
> The fancy out-work nature.'"

"Your question I positively cannot answer," observed Mr. Ichell.

"It belongs to a Miss Ashmore," replied Dentnoris, "who will thank you for the compliment with a voice

> 'Like the faint exquisite music of a dream!'"

"By the stars of heaven I must be introduced!" rejoined the flippant old beau.

"And I will with pleasure undertake the task of making you acquainted with each other," said Harold, smiling at the gentleman's admiration of a woman towards whom he himself felt an involuntary contempt.

"And then, her voice!" exclaimed the *roué*, "you say it is beautiful, my lord?"

Harold answered,—

. . . . "'Tis more than human!
Never, till now, had it been given
To lips of any mortal woman
To utter notes so fresh from heaven,
Sweet as the breath of angel sighs,
When angel sighs are most divine."

"Ah!—ah! And what may be her Christian name?"

"Lucy! But what is in a name!" sighed the romancer.

"And now," thought Harold, resuming his fidgetty march, "I have helped one of your guests, perhaps two, to an evening's entertainment, Lady Loder; and established a golden opinion in that worn out breast of yours, old sir, by my felicitous quotations."

Harold Dentnoris often flew away on the most decided of imagination's discursive wings —for imagination has many a pair on which the proud, the good, the weak, and wicked, occasionally take flight—those our hero employed deposited him on the couch whereon Mr. Ichell had just seated himself; the sudden

flinging of his elegant person into the neighbouring half of the sofa, startled his young acquaintance, who immediately rose.

"A thousand pardons, Lord Dentnoris."

"A thousand requests that you will grant them to me with all expedition, my dear sir; but I thought I saw you dancing!"

"Me! Oh, no! The fates forbid it! Lady Delvor is forgetful to-night, and I am fool enough to be offended! Aye, more—to feel resentment! I'll shoot that man for his impertinence!"

"What man? How is this?" said Dentnoris, endeavouring to suppress a smile; "I fear the ladies have yet to teach you despair, young sir."

"Not so, my lord," returned Ichell, indignantly. "I am young, but I have learned despair!"

He was moving away, when Harold rose, and putting his arm within his companion's, led him again to the ball-room. "A singular

confidence seems to constrain me as I thus take the liberty of joining you, and I trust you will pardon the unconquerable impulse."

"Oh, verily, I am much obliged to 'your singularity' for chasing the 'blue devils,'" said the young man.

Lady Loder joined them; "I must have five words with you to-night, truant," she observed, speaking laughingly to Harold.

"I will do myself the honour of calling to-morrow on you, my lord," remarked the youth, with a friendly bow to Dentnoris, and a hearty 'shake hands' with the lady; and, as was afterwards discovered, the offended lieutenant quitted the gay scene, and his fascinating spell,* to indulge wilder revelries in a lonely home. The merry old dame had been for some moments engaged in conversation with a circle of "wall flowers," though still leaning on Harold's arm, while his own mind returned to its one vision.

"I wish I could hear something more ex-

plicit about her. It seems to me that had Mary ever loved me, truly, she might have formed some reason for returning to our once dear England. I fancy it is as they say—that good humoured chaperon of hers has besought her affection for Lady Wilverton's rejected admirer. Well, if her humility qualify the compliment, she is perfectly at liberty to choose for herself. Women are as changeful at heart as in their head gear. Yet, Mary, you were so gently joyous—so different to the swarm of giddy butterflies surrounding one continually—your quiescent manner may be understood wrongly. Reign on in this bosom, lovely one; we certainly seemed to make the world to each other at one past happier time. Perhaps I am vain. Yet, no; Have I been exacting? Have I left the declaration of my love to be revealed by her? Surely not. Her woman's heart would shrink from offering any sign of love unsought. Ah, no!—I remember — Harold the Illegitimate was not

beloved—yet wealth, rank, splendour, could not win her; the Duke of St. ——— was rejected!—Percy Loder refused! Mary, if you are not won by William Belton, the trial shall be made. Cast me off—despise me, if you will—the winning the blessed guerdon would be heaven—its loss———"

"When will your ruminations cease, Dentnoris? I have been longing for your attention. Come, child, come!" said Lady Loder, "I have news for you; but first I congratulate you on having banished the wicked little deity from your counsels, even as Percy has done; and now for my news. The lovely girl has accepted Sir William."

"What lovely girl, dear lady?"

"Mary Clairlowe. Lady Belton says that she has no farther doubt on the subject. Mary had a narrow escape from a serious accident, which she will more fully explain another time—but the episode, it appears, has served to confirm the hope she entertained—and

really it is time Miss Clairlowe married, she was twenty last week."

Did any of my readers ever experience the emotion caused by such a piece of news—given while their own heart-beat was sacred to the absent; they alone can imagine the memory of it—they can tell how drear and empty the mind feels—how lone and desolate seems the brilliant present—how dim and scattered the senses of hearing, seeing, or understanding; how one stands, from the whole universe apart, miserable and forlorn. Yet the o'erteeming sentence has been borne; some have concealed their stupor and their grief—some forgotten! others heard the sad decree, and died!

His silence was unnoticed by Lady Loder.

"Charlotte can tell you more, my dear!" said she; but the panic-struck Harold shuddered at the mere suggestion; he dreaded to encounter Lady Delvor's thrilling laugh; and only bidding his inconsiderate, well-intentioned friend excuse him, and make illness the plea, should any

one inquire for so unentertaining a personage, carried off his crushed hopes to dwell on them alone.

Sincerely the old lady grieved for having made the communication; but nothing could account for Lord Dentnoris' unnecessary distress, as she thought it.

The newspapers gave a flourishing account of the magnificent assembly at Loder Castle; they made no mention of the half-broken hearts it caused, nor the pantomime gaiety of calculating mammas; none reported that Lucy Ashmore had gained a husband by Harold's quotations, or consented to wear the coronet of a profligate old debauchee; they recorded not that the daughter of the proud Herbertons would torture the young soldier's unfixed principles into vice; or that the handsome Dentnoris was unhappy; more than all, that the hero of the scene supported a counterfeit mirth. No! the board was gay, and they who gave it grateful to the guests who met to celebrate a son's preferment.

CHAPTER X.

With all that chilling mystery of mien,
. . . .
He had (if 'twere not nature's boon) an art,
Of fixing memory on another's heart.
It was not love, perchance, nor hate—nor aught
That words can image to express the thought;
But they who saw him did not see in vain,
And, once beheld, would ask of him again.
LARA.

"I WISH George would return to us, instead of waiting for you in Italy, Harold," was Sarah Dentnoris' daily theme. "I really cannot be patient any longer; eighteen months he has been absent. When are we going abroad, Aunt Marianne?"

"When will you go?" said Lady Wilverton; "suppose we accompany Harold?"

"Beautiful! delicious! Oh yes! that, after all, is the wisest of wise propositions," replied the delighted girl. "But I fear you have forgotten, dear aunt, your promise to be in England for Miss Clairlowe's 'presentation.'"

Alas, poor Dentnoris! he remembered the engagement, and ascribed Mrs. Clairlowe's determination to abide by it to the news Lady Loder had given him. It was only probable the Colonel wished to hurry her introduction to royalty, previous to her casting aside his name for ever!

"What will Mary's colours be? I hope blue and white," added Sarah. "I thought my sagacious brother would, as usual, know all about it, and, like the youth by the margin of Zurich's fair waters, soon find tongue to speak."

"Fie, little quiz," murmured Lady Wilverton, not willing to prohibit, yet anxious to avoid, the subject. "Surely I heard the noise of wheels in our neighbourhood?"

Harold heeded not the remark; he had revived every thought to mar his heart's rest; and sunk into a reverie concerning the next drawing-room.

Who would introduce her? Of course her own mother; and Sir William would occupy her attention. His fancy conjured up ten thousand ills.

The impression Miss Clairlowe would unquestionably make; the consequent introductions, Almack's, morning concerts, and the like matin scenes, where her freshness must attract every eye; the opera! there he painted his idol decked in the blazing diamonds—heir-looms—for which her mother had been celebrated.

It wanted only six weeks of the appointed time. "Heigho!" sighed the lover; "impetuosity, they tell me, hath proved the bane of my ancestors; at all events they find its antidote in me—I shall not incur the wild denunciation."

These were his musings, when a loud laugh surprised the little party, and George appeared.

"Just in time, Mr. Clarke. What amusing companions you must be. Sarah, you are grown quite a woman. And, Aunt Marianne, by this, and this," said the happy boy, kissing her most fervently, "I return to love you twenty thousand times more than ever! The death of Mr. Clarke's rich uncle changed our plans altogether," continued George; "and in lieu of posting off to Spain, we embarked immediately from L——a, and, by a steamer, arrived at Southampton yesterday."

"Have you not seen your Uncle Beverley?" inquired Lady Wilverton.

"Oh, yes; but when I found your presence wanting, I remained scarcely a moment. And, Sarah, I pray you pardon me, I waited not to see even Charles. My uncle laughed at me; however, that could not deter the haste I was

in to see you; he only turned away, saying, 'there goes a Dentnoris.'"

Harold looked at his young brother, amazed at the strange communion of thought between them.

"Where did you leave the Clairlowes?" inquired the aunt.

"They were scattered in every direction—the Colonel at Naples, Mrs. Clairlowe and Lodwick at Clarens, Lady Belton and Sir William at Florence, and—and, let me see—oh, Miss Belton at Constantinople. 'Gone to join the happy pair,' as the papers say. How rejoiced I was when Mary Clairlowe refused that horrid spoon."

"George, what are you saying?" exclaimed his sister.

Dentnoris looked anxious; he pined to learn some tidings of the last-mentioned lady; and his provoking brother had divined the thoughts hurriedly passing through his mind; yet for

some reason the intelligence was still withheld.

"Is that all you have to communicate regarding your old favourite, George?" asked Lady Wilverton.

"No; but I cannot utter all my information a la thunderbolt."

"This is too absurd," again murmured Harold, impatiently.

"No, not in the least. I have very little to say, and I wish to make that little last. There, Harold, look at that," said George, offering a letter to his brother. "People — by people I mean Lady Belton—declare that 'her son hath won the distinguished Mary's heart.'"

"What does Colonel Clairlowe say?"

"Nothing; he only laughs, shakes his head, and gives that odd sigh no one yet ever understood," replied the boy.

"And Mrs. Clairlowe ——"

"Looks grave, and hopes not!" said George.

In the meantime Harold Dentnor's perused

the contents of Miss Clairlowe's last epistle. It ran thus:—

"Our heavy task is done. We saw her laid in the quiet tomb—poor Ida! And now for an answer to your question; (by the way, I think I must send a few restrictions connected with your interrogating poor me on any subject you please, since you have so soon begun to deal in absurdities,) I am as much disengaged at this moment as when you were near me; nor can I imagine who could have told you anything concerning my secrets. Quite enough about myself, dear Georgy. I most probably shall die

'An old maiden of sixty-three,'

though without the wish or power to warn other ladies from my example."

We will read no farther—quite contented with the ingenuous explanation of the writer. Our hero, however, was far from satisfied, and returned the billet with an aching heart. "Of

course," he argued, "she could not make George her confidant. It is but an evasion."

Lady Wilverton and her niece quickly left the dining-room—the former to muse over the recollection of the many unavailing hours she had devoted to the fickle Countess, whose death Miss Clairlowe's letter described, and Sarah to receive the gifts contained in George's portmanteau.

In the favourite bay-window (where, many years ago, Lady Wilverton first wept the disappointment occasioned by the change in Brook Emmersly) she stood again.

Retrospects filled her mind—some glad, but many sad thoughts flitted over her imagination, and the prodigal of her first tender care was once more remembered. Ida Estalles had been his second; since then a third victim had, within her own knowledge, swelled the list of his crimes, and were now registered against him in Heaven. "Three victims!" repeated Marianne Wilverton aloud.

"Aye, three victims!" uttered a low melancholy voice from without.

"Brook Emmersly!" exclaimed the lady.

"Lady Wilverton," was the calm reply, as, with a graceful bow, the figure retreated.

The moon's light rendered the form too clearly discernible for mistake, and thick shrubs hid the departing visitant ere Lady Wilverton realised the idea.

Sarah had just re-entered the room, laughing joyously at George's having become a perfect virtuoso by his travels. The attitude of her aunt instantly dissipated her hilarity; standing with one hand still holding back the muslin drapery of the window, (the shutters of which, on moonlight nights, were always left unclosed), with a gaze riveted on the lawn. The subdued shriek, as Sarah suddenly approached, alarmed the merry girl, who vainly spoke without receiving even an answering look.

The two brothers followed her light step

into the room, and, equally astonished, advanced towards Lady Wilverton.

"Was it really Brook Emmersly I saw?" at length she asked.

"Who, my dear aunt?" said Harold.

"Brook Emmersly."

"I am here," muttered a hollow voice.

"Bid him depart, I implore you," exclaimed Lady Wilverton. "Not now! I could not bear his presence now—I am faint."

"Three victims, and no other!" again repeated the incognito.

"By Heaven, this shall not be borne. See, she faints. Oh, something more than trifling has overcome Aunt Marianne," observed her nephew, angrily.

"Ay, take care of *Her*, she hath conquered *Me!*" uttered the voice in a collected tone.

"Let me relinquish this dear hand to you, George; chafe it still. Waynard, tend her well."

"Farewell, Marianne!" once more echoed the voice from without; "farewell!"

"By my life, I will teach that tyrant a lesson. I recognise the sounds; they proceed from the greatest villain on earth. I will hunt him till he dies!" exclaimed Dentnoris, with passionate vehemence.

George and Sarah both remembered Mr. Emmersly with a sort of indefinite uncertainty; yet, despite of all, his kindness to themselves clung tenaciously to their young minds, and they were surprised to think his simple presence should thus startle their good Aunt Marianne.

The medical man at length arrived. Lady Wilverton had suffered a relapse, and broken a blood-vessel; he, therefore, kindly intimated the necessity for a physician's advice.

Terrible suspense ensued; both brothers were absent, and poor Sarah had, alone, except for the agitated Waynard's love, to hear the fatal truth—"Fear the worst."

Morning came. Sir A—— C——— stole into the chamber; he was a personal friend of

Lady Wilverton, and felt every interest in her suffering. After listening to the particulars, he took the cold stiff fingers in his hand.

"There is life," whispered he; "there is still warmth and life, although the feeble pulse indicates excessive exhaustion. Pen and paper, if you please; or will you send express for your usual attendant? he ought to have met me here."

"It is half-an-hour before the time he said you would probably arrive, sir," said Waynard, willing to excuse the universal favourite, Mr. W——.

Towards evening Lady Wilverton evinced less death-like stillness; her colour was observed to change. Sarah watched untiringly; and while Waynard and the nurse dosed, she still gazed on, watching for the slightest sign to manifest life within the white, motionless form. She felt at length, 'mid the drowsy circle, too sensibly alone with the pale clay, and, overpowered by dread, the timid girl

hid her face in the pillow near her darling aunt.

"Some one surely breathes," thought Sarah, raising her eyes. It was Sir Brook. Tranquil and undismayed, he waved his hand in token of silence, touched the icy brow of the sufferer, gazed into Miss Dentnoris' mute face, turned once again to the insensate Lady Wilverton, knelt for a brief space at her feet, breathed "Marianne!" and departed—with the noiseless heavy tread of dark despair.

Brook Emmersly thought it was indeed the corpse of his reverenced monitress that lay so lifeless and so pale before him. The idea bewildered him; and, while Harold pursued his empty carriage, Brook Emmersly bribed the nurse to admit him to the chamber, whence he passed, by an opposite door, as the doctor approached the trembling Sarah, within whose breast contending arguments came and went in rapid succession. She dared not betray the intruder, yet how maintain the secret.

"She slumbers," observed the professional man. "Sir A—— C—— remains here to-night, I consequently stay also; take advantage of our watchfulness over Lady Wilverton to obtain rest yourself, dear young lady. See, she slumbers."

"Slumbers, dear sir! do you call this inanition slumber?"

"The faintness has passed off, and a gentle slumber of delirium has succeeded," said the doctor. "You must keep her very still; she may yet wholly recover."

"Stony technicalist," thought Miss Dentnoris, "to argue on such a subject coolly thus."

Night returned; Sarah sought one moment's rest on a sofa in the library; she could not sleep, anxiety kept her wakeful; and once more the figure of Sir Crook presented itself.

"Sarah Dentnoris, your murdered father's ghost still haunts a heart long since yielded to the Evil One. Gertrude Grey is with me here!" said he, striking his breast; "Nellie,

the pure good Nellie, my pride destroyed; Ida Estalles, too, I vanquished; but the bright spirit in your care I worship still. Speak to me! say she is not dead! If dead, this spot shall be my last breathing place on this most abject earth!

"Speak, I say, or ——. No! I will not madden quite. Miss Dentnoris, I feel my senses gradually withering before you. Tell me, is she dead? is Marianne Wilverton no longer on this earth? hath her soul, her blessed soul departed? Your silence, like a thousand trumpets, proclaims her death!"

"No!" whispered the affrighted girl, "she is not dead."

"Powers of light and life! angels of Heaven guard thee! you have saved my soul! Away with me! Bless you, Miss Dentnoris—bless you all. Farewell! Tell Marianne I am at 'Bridgewater Hall.'

'Oh, Marianne! where art thou?
Thou canst not hear my bitter pleading;

Ah! couldst thou, thou wouldst pardon now,
Though Heaven were to my prayer unheeding.
Oh, Marianne! now for thee—
The heart for which thou bled'st is bleeding—
Revenge is lost in agony,
And wild remorse to rage succeeding.'

Remember these words of Byron's, Miss Dentnoris—they have tranquillized my burning brain. Pray her to pardon me. Farewell!"

He was gone. The successful gallant, the treacherous companion, was defeated! What were his conquests now? At this period of our history remorse had begun its work; but we must not anticipate.

The recovery of Lady Wilverton filled many a sinking heart with unspeakable joy; but Harold and George yet wandered on, chasing the reckless spoiler. No one could render any clue to his whereabouts; his own domestics at Bridgewater had learnt no tidings of their mad master for months, they said, in answer to Harold's inquiry.

"Not really mad, your master cannot be."

"Lor, my lord," said the groom, "please your lordship, he have left us all at home, and is gone gallavanting about, with hired post-boys, and carriage too, let alone the lacquey he got from your place, my lord—a man who knows the turning and corners of every house, lane, and character in the neighbourhood."

Lord Dentnoris relinquished the vain pursuit, and learned, on his return to Landsworth, the sad account of his aunt's illness. The name became once more a prohibited sound, and all seemed quiet harmony with the ruffled spirits of the family circle; yet nightly was one pillow bedewed with tears for the traitor—one pure heart pleaded for him to God's throne, prayed for the Saviour's mediation, to gain the pardon his own soul had not courage to implore. Thus was Brook Emmersly's prediction verified—none but that one heart remembered him, except to revive his fascinating tones, or graceful carriage. No other voice besought eternal pardon for his follies and crimes.

CHAPTER XI.

> There blend the ties that strengthen
> Our hearts in hours of grief—
> The silver links that lengthen
> Joy's visits when most brief.
>
> BERNARD BARTON.

"GOOD-MORROW to you, Miss Dentnoris. How came you here so early? Lady Wilverton, too, looking, as I trust she feels, perfectly restored to health."

Such were Percy Loder's hasty salutations to the two ladies, as he met them on his way from an early summer ride. "And to what fortunate haven are your steps directed?"

"To your own home, Mr. Loder," replied Aunt Marianne.

"And," said Sarah, "when that stare of amazement has vanished, I will tell you more."

"Oh, tell me now, then," observed the gentleman; "I am curious to hear. Come, let me lead you to the breakfast-room. My mother is not yet awake, I dare say, but the glad surprise will hasten her toilette duties not a little.

"Now, Miss Dentnoris, grant me the history of your travels to be."

"Upon this hint I speak," said the lively girl; "you must know we are on a pilgrimage to Wilverton Abbey, and in the evening hope to welcome the Clairlowes *en route* to Marchmont, and, more, to insist on our promised week of their dear company."

Percy sighed—the prospect of seeing Mary again darted like lightning through his frame, and suffused his cheek with blushes; then

came the remembrance of her rejection, and the colour left his brow; he schooled his feelings into calmness, and continued—"You breakfast here, of course?"

"Even so, your honour," answered Sarah, who had just heard him so addressed by the peasantry.

"It is yet very early," said Percy.

"And," replied the happy Sarah, "if there be an obtrusive thought remaining, by which you would wish to deprecate our unseasonable appearance, I pray you speak your speeches at once, and not torture me—at least, if Aunt Marianne should not care about it—any longer than you can possibly avoid."

"You quiz more than ever since your brother's return, Miss Sarah."

"Miss Dentnoris, if you are determined to 'miss' me, Mr. Loder; but I hate to be 'missed' in every sense of the word, by Percy the magnificent, this complimentary morning."

"Well, shall I tell you why and wherefore I 'missed' you?" asked Percy.

"Yes, instantly do."

"Because there was no one among our dinner guests yesterday whose presence I would more have preferred to thine own, fair Sarah, nor one whose absence could be more deplored."

"Hey-day! what! already this morning? See what I have done—made you repeat your new glossary! I must hear something more, if any remain of the soft sentences."

"Sarah, love, how you chatter," observed Lady Wilverton. "Indeed, Mr. Loder, she was very ridiculous, and would not leave her convalescent aunt."

"So much for gratitude," said the laughing girl.

"Where is Dentnoris?"

"Asleep. We left him with closed eyes, instead of practising the sort of somnambulistic peregrinations he has of late tried—by way of chasing nightmares, I suppose; in truth,

my dear brother is grown a little demented lately, and the sooner he exercises his perspicuity the better for his general deportment. And now I have exchanged long words for your long speeches, Percy Loder, what say you?"

"You are become quite a philosopher, Sarah."

"Exactly! in proportion to my brother's defalcation; but that is no compliment. I really feel sure he is a little mystified about something or somebody. But here comes Lady Loder, and my lord," said Sarah.

"My sweet little Sally, whence did you spring?" exclaimed Lord Loder. "This is refreshing to a man half-asleep. And why? God bless you, Lady Wilverton, the clouds have been prolific this morning. What, up already, Percy!"

"And prepared to revisit his dormitory, I should think," returned Sarah, "if one may judge by his closed eyes."

Where were his thoughts then roving? To an expected arrival—the advent of a slight tall girl, not very tall, but exquisitely formed, with bright abundant curls, and step of fairy lightness—the meek betrothed of William Belton. These thoughts closed his eyes—not pleasant sleep, but saddening memories.

"You were not playing nameless devoirs to dinner-eaters and their daughters yesternight, and can therefore afford to laugh," retorted Mr. Loder.

"Ah, by the calendar, I never saw you make love so lustily before; by Jove, thunder and lightning was nothing to be compared to it. Charlotte Delvor declared you had been taking a pennyworth of the whirligig, and intended following her precepts for the future," said the father.

"Better Lady Delvor took a whirl backwards, and returned from whence she started on her present frivolous pursuits, dear sir."

"Well, don't look dismal, son of mine, but

give your arm to Sarah, and let us trip along to see the red passion-flower in bloom."

After proceeding a few yards with his joyous companion, Percy inquired how Mrs. Beverley Dentnoris and Charles Bacon liked their new neighbourhood?

"I believe both are equally enraptured with it," replied Sarah.

"But they must miss their old friends?"

Percy caught the radiant look of his young companion, and added,—

"You have not seen them lately. Does not Charles write his regrets to your brother?"

"No, not often; and from all I know of him, of that which he cares most about he says the least he can."

"You are very truthful, Sarah," remarked her questioner; "will you answer me one question, and think me not impertinent in making it?"

"I will answer you, if possible; but as to the impertinence of my confessor, I am pretty

considerably sure his interrogatory will breathe of his peculiar failing."

"Ah, I see my secret must be deferred till after breakfast. Here comes old John to summon us."

When their son and his rosy partner took their seats at the breakfast table, the former laughed into a happy mood by the artless blandishments of his companion, our ancient host pondered over a few vague notions, which, spite of himself, reduced the old man's hopes into a wish that Percy would wait a while, and woo little Sarah.

His wife sat by, and, totally ignorant of her lord's speculations, acquiesced in every sentiment he was silently enjoying. Her love of setting things right, and proportioning a share of happiness to every individual round her, was an everlasting ambition with the mother.

While the son, whose stake was thus considered, smiled, outwardly amused, but inwardly true to the one dear memory, Sarah recalled

the features of his dream—her light hair and richly blue eyes, drooping in beautiful confusion, yet still looking towards one, ere the shadowing lids concealed them quite, more resembled Mary's than any other person's he had ever met; and, though totally unlike, the general tournure brought forcibly to his mind the outline of the girl he loved—the girl who doomed his life to celibacy.

Breakfast passed, as most breakfasts do; and, after the departure of their welcome guests, the venerable couple returned to their newspapers, perfectly contented that their heir would change his mind, and grieve no more for Mary Clairlowe.

CHAPTER XII.

She watched, yet feared to meet his glance;
And he shunned hers; till when by chance
They met, the point of foeman's lance
Had given a milder pang!
Beneath the intolerable smart
He writhed; then sternly manned his heart
To play his hard but destined part.
THE LORD OF THE ISLES.

In vain, with mingled hope and fear,
She looks for him, whose voice so dear
Had come like music to her ear—
Strange mocking dream! again 'tis fled.
MOORE.

LORD DENTNORIS and his young brother were pacing the terrace of the Manor House, momentarily expecting Lady Wilverton and her guests.

The time arrived, the carriages were actually at the door, the steps let down, and Mary Clairlowe's hand clasped in that of Harold—it was there but for one instant, yet had its touch awakened him to all earth's glories—it had chased the abstraction of years, and sealed the irrevocable faith within him. Yet, was she not another's pledged bride? Yes! thought Harold; and the world grew dim again.

"Dentnoris," said Sir William Belton, on the fourth morning of their visit, "can you allow me ten minutes' conversation, while the ladies are preparing for this survey of your splendid old church?"

"Twenty, Sir William, with the most perfect pleasure," replied our hero, attempting to assume a gaiety he felt not.

"May our conversation take place in the balcony?"

"With all my heart."

"Your look belies your mirth, Dentnoris."

"You are pleased to be severe, sir; or is it simple pleasantry?"

"Maybe I am earnest in my pleasantry, my lord; would that you were equally sincere with me. But, now, we have only ten minutes, we must make good use of our time," added the baronet.

"Let me first inquire, are we friends, Dentnoris?"

"Sir William!"

"Are we friends, Harold?"

"Indeed, it would seem we were," retorted Lord Dentnoris.

"Well, be it so. I will be more frank towards you, and at once reveal my cause of annoyance. You invariably leave Miss Clairlowe to my charge, in a manner that not only

affronts her, but deprives me of the only pleasure to which I have to look forward. Much as I esteem Miss Clairlowe, it is not necessary for me to persecute her with the intrusive attentions to which you compel me, or for me to resign the chances of being able to form my own schemes occasionally. I cannot see you lead Lady Wilverton off so regularly, without inquiring your motive. The brotherly attachment I have for Miss Clairlowe ——"

"Brotherly!" said Dentnoris, impatiently; "do not dupe me, Belton."

"Mine is unaffected worship, Dentnoris, for ——; but here come the ladies. When we return we can renew the subject, if you please."

"Oh yes, certainly; this interruption is ill timed; and now I go to put the arm of Lady Wilverton within my own again."

"Harold — my lord — I see we are not friends; yet hear me once—I wish to accom-

pany Lady Wilverton. Can you yield your triumph for one hour?"

"My triumph!" exclaimed Harold; but only Mary heard the ejaculation—Sir William had vanished with the widow of Sir Taunton Wilverton.

"Miss Clairlowe," said Harold, "I am glad to find our revelry last night has not impaired your bloom."

There was a hacknied coldness in the compliment that struck poor Mary to the heart.

"He is not my Harold of former days, I fear," thought she, and the look that sought his averted gaze was soon cast down in tears.

When the two reached the door, they found that all but George had departed. Kindly he assisted her to mount, and vainly essayed to cheer his depressed favourite; then galloped on.

"You leave Landsworth to-morrow, I fear, Miss Clairlowe?"

"I believe so," replied Mary, coldly.

A profound sigh startled his companion.

"Say how I have displeased you, Lord Dentnoris? I am not anxious to sustain the evident mistake."

Mary spoke more coldly even than at first; she trembled lest he might impute to boldness that which her honest nature constrained her to say.

"Mary, I implore you to forgive me. Miss Clairlowe, according to report, you are soon to change your father's name for that of your friend."

"Lord Dentnoris, would you retain my friendship?"

Harold gazed on the face whence the question proceeded.

"You know too well, Miss Clairlowe, your esteem is life to me."

"One is generally more tenacious of exist-

ence, Lord Dentnoris," said Mary, almost inaudibly, "than you have made me acutely feel you were of my esteem—our esteem, I ought to say."

"Do not say 'our,' Miss Clairlowe. Heaven knows, I understand you."

"Harold," said George and Sarah in a breath, "I have seen such lovely deer in Percy Park, oh much more beautiful than any other."

"Well!"

"Well!" said his sister, echoing his reply, "is that all I am to receive for my information?" then, riding close by his side, whispered a few words, laughed, looked archly at the blushing Mary, and soon rejoined her party. George remained by the beautiful girl, fearing she had been offended by his brother's silence.

"Miss Clairlowe, do not look so grave," at length he murmured.

"I shall not look gayer, if you address me so reverentially, George."

"Well, Mary, my wife," said the happy boy, returning to his privileged appellation, "shall we pass on—see, this poor little peasant is waiting with the open gate?"

Harold threw sixpence to the grateful child, and they passed into the churchyard.

How sad are those feelings that bid us dread to cultivate the only love, the only attraction our hearts yearn to gratify. Dentnoris feared his changeless love might betray him to reveal his passionate tenderness to the woman he supposed engaged to Sir William Belton. Honour forbade it, and he shrank from the ordeal; his bright dream must pass away—the spirit of the dreary future hovered over him; and he stood far off from the group within the church, musing sorrowfully.

George led Miss Clairlowe to the organ loft,

where the organist awaited them. Singing commenced.

The sacred songs of the Messiah followed. The choristers consisted of Lady Wilverton, Sir William Belton, Sarah, and Charles Bacon. Colonel Clairlowe was spell-bound. "Surely such strains proceeding from such hearts must find sure welcome in Heaven," thought he.

The music ceased.

"Now for the chorus! the chorus!" was re-echoed by each; and Sarah pleaded for Harold's rich mellow bass.

"Dentnoris has left us," said Mrs. Clairlowe; "he looked as if he thought us humdrum folks, upon whom it was not worth while to waste his time."

"Something is the matter with that brother of mine," observed Miss Dentnoris; "and know the cause I will, or look as sulky as a cloudy night."

Away ran the sister. However, the concert had received a check, and each one seemed willing to survey the monuments instead of continuing it.

Mary wandered alone to a retired spot near the altar, and had placed one little foot on the step, when a boot in immediate approximation presented anything but a fair match.

The property which had startled her belonged to Lord Dentnoris; and, however far off and separated their paths might be hereafter, each felt they had stood there together.

"Mary, dear," said Colonel Clairlowe, drawing his daughter's arm affectionately through his own, "this riding-dress fatigues you; I never saw you look so thin and white. Come with me, my darling, and lie down a minute or two on this bench. There, see what a nurse I make," observed the father, bringing cushions from the seat of a neighbouring pew.

"Now, I suppose, I must finish my office by singing a lullaby."

"And no more riding for you to-day; you have not recovered sufficiently, my love," added her mother.

Mary was glad to avoid the chance of meeting Harold again. She hoped he loved her; yet, if so, why torment her thus unceasingly? "Oh," thought she, "if he would but give me one word, like those of old—one look to treasure with that moment of long ago. I think I could be happier. Heaven knows—I cannot tell—what, what can his sadness, his aversion mean?"

The party regained the Manor House, and almost immediately Wilson was inquiring for his master. Dinner was announced without their host, and the evening had far advanced.

"Where can Harold be?" asked Lady Wil-

verton, in vain; her anxiety increased as night approached.

Many causes for his absence were adduced in the minds of the guests; yet only one of the opinions expressed "an accident must have happened;" and, *malgré* all their guesses, this last reason proved correct. He had been thrown from his horse when galloping, and was now only waiting for a carriage to take him home.

The little apothecary himself communicated the intelligence; and but few moments were lost ere the warm-hearted Colonel and George rolled away in a barouche to learn the nature of the unfortunate mischance.

"Good-morrow to you, Dentnoris," said Colonel Clairlowe; "I am sorry to leave you such an invalid; but Lody would be horridly disappointed if we did not meet him according to our promise."

"The idle fellow has not been to any of the levees yet, but waits, he says, for Mary, who really is not half well enough for a London season; the racket and bother of it wont do her much good, I'm thinking. Well, good bye. We have had a happy week of it; and as soon as you are well enough, come up to town. The debates will be amusing enough if P—— goes on in the same way as he did last week—it is the only thing worth going to London for. Good bye."

A hearty grasp and kindly look passed between them. On either side there were misgivings; and the good old soldier lamented bitterly the consequences of his mistaken pride.

"Had I," thought he, "but encouraged their love, who knows but they both might have been as happy as her mother and myself by this time? Too speculative humanity!"

London was crowded and gay; brilliant saloons spread their mazy snares before the lovely girl; glad hearts were many; and nought but the glory of delight, the flowers of happiness, were around her. She was courted, admired, beloved—the triumph of the "most beautiful" awarded to her, and splendid alliances proposed.

Percy Loder gazed abstractedly upon the star of his mute admiration. Meteor-like she swept through the giddy polka, then the graceful waltz, glided gently as a fairy queen in the calm quadrille; yet no other than Lodwick performed the envious task of encircling her waist: she had old-fashioned notions in this respect.

Lady Wilverton at length arrived, and Mary's heart removed the veil beneath which gaiety had concealed itself—she smiled, for he, the beloved of her young heart, would look with her on the scenes around.

"And now," said Aunt Marianne, "you must spend to-morrow with me; I have so much to say, so much to hear, that, indeed, I hope you have no cruel refusal to give me. Do not think we shall be too grave a party! Lady Belton, Mary Anne, and Sir William are to arrive by the latest train."

"When shall I come?" asked Miss Clairlowe.

"At day-break — our day-break — eight o'clock," replied Lady Wilverton.

The promise given, Mary half-repented having made it.

Lord Dentnoris had evinced no sign of love —his demeanour to herself, cold as ever, had unbent more to the worldly crowd, and rendered him an immense attraction. And, though Mary's eye looked bright, and her cheek roseate with the hue of apparent health, Harold Dentnoris feared the hidden canker beneath—he knew not how the heart pined for him! How

more than galling were the chains she wore—the jealousies, the heart-burnings, the tearful night and cheerless morning, the sickening spirit and rebuked hope, the never-ceasing wish to see, to hear, the well-beloved voice, the sorrowing adieu!

Harold saw her as the promised wife of another; and, though day by day they met and, parted the secret was too fatally concealed; Mary's only joy consisting in being within hearing of a monosyllable from his lips.

"My dear," said Mrs. Clairlowe to her husband, "Mary is gone; I have just sent her off with a kiss for you. You felt her touch you, didn't you? She would not have you waked."

"Is she gone already? yes, I suppose so—it is past eight. How was she looking?"

"Very flushed—more so than usual," replied the anxious mother. "Do you know, Clairlowe, I have resolved, if Dentnoris does not

offer to our child, to ask him what he is about. I am certain good will proceed from my interference."

"Good never came of anything of the sort, my dear," said the Colonel; "wait, and all will go straight enough."

"But Mary suffers too much, my dear; indeed she does," again continued the mother.

"Well, mayhap to-day will bring forth something. We dine there, don't we?"

The breakfast bell sounded a second time—Dentnoris heeded it not, but lingered still over a glossy curl. Fruitlessly Wilson knocked at his door, with the information, "Breakfast waiting, my lord."

"How can I see them?" he muttered; "how can I meet her? A look would reveal all I feel. I will not do it; yet there is no escape. Out upon my selfishness! Nay, I am not entirely destitute of consideration for others."

"Lady Wilverton begs to ask if she may be admitted, my lord?" said Wilson.

"By all means," exclaimed Harold, retaining in his hand the beloved tress, and hastily approaching his aunt.

"Harold, why do you not join us? you have been ready this half hour, Wilson tells me, and perfectly well. I am nearly or quite vexed with you. Come," said the lady, "I beseech you; do not sit here in moodiness, apart from all who expect you."

"I attend you, lady. When I can, I will explain the cause of the delinquency."

"Why not on our way now? but whose curl is that hanging from your ruthless grasp, Harold? Surely it is Mary Clairlowe's—no other hair was ever like hers."

"No!—yes!—at least, frankly, I dare not say."

"This to *me*, Harold! this mystery about a

curl! You evidently had no wish to conceal it, or Aunt Marianne would not impertinently have inquired into your secret. Let us join our party. I am unamiable, and intreat you to pardon the ill humour."

"Dear lady, hear me. It is not my secret. Acquit me of keeping undue silence on a subject too dear to my soul, and through the trials of which you have cheered and supported me. If the curl were mine, you should have heard my truthful confession."

"Not yours, Harold?"

"Not mine, nor meant for my possession."

"Yet certainly it once was Mary Clairlowe's," observed Lady Wilverton, thoughtfully. There was sorrow in her mind as she spoke; and the next moment brought her into the presence of those whose "future" seemed inscrutably mysterious.

That breakfast-room was in itself beautiful;

though the group scattered over it may have enhanced its charms and perfected perfection.

Soft lilac silk drooped over the windows on one side, while curtains of rich muslin floated on the other, with fringed drops of snowy whiteness; clusters of lilac and laburnum blended together strewed the white grounded carpet.

The walls had many recesses, ornamented with the choicest china and bits of vertu; while in the centre of each stood a vase of blooming perfumed exotics, Miss Clairlowe's favourite flowers. Mary loved flowers, and heath flowers more than all; they reminded her of hearts at ease—hearts free from anxiety, unheeded by folly, dispossessed of ambitious hopes, knowing no chances of despair, and they must be sought, they who cared for must toil to win.

The quiet Mary Anne Belton sat on the

ottoman, asking no question; Sir William, reading the paper, seemed tranquilly happy; Sarah already at the breakfast table, busy in destroying a rose; and Mary, half-hidden by the window-drapery, appeared to entertain some hope of teaching the caged birds to return her sigh for sigh. Lord Dentnoris stood beside her; gladness for one instant lighted his beaming countenance, and Mary looked no more; she would not dissipate the fond illusion, and therefore marked not the hacknied smile return as they assembled round the table.

Miss Clairlowe spoke. "Sir William, here is a paragraph that I hope will amuse you; and I beg you, if you will be good enough, to proclaim its admirable suggestion."

The request was unanimously seconded.

"Oh, no! mark my avocation," said the blushing girl; and, gently withdrawing the paper from Lord Dentnoris, who had taken it

up, curious to see the passage alluded to, she observed,—

"Not now, my grave lord; remember I came from afar this morning, and was ready for breakfast, therefore deserve some reward for so unfrequent a coincidence—all I ask is obedience," said she, playfully lifting her eyes to his face.

He looked on her a cold, deep, longing gaze, and turned away.

"Well, Dentnoris," said Sir William, as the door closed upon the ladies' exit, "are you not still curious to know the subject of our laugh?"

"I can only imagine it very interesting to you at least, Belton, since it suffused Miss Clairlowe's face with such evident indications of pleasure."

"Read for yourself, Dentnoris."

"Among the manifold changes of our hemi-

sphere, there is one in contemplation, long anticipated, and we are glad to state, from the very best authority, about to be speedily consummated. Sir William Belton will, during the approaching autumn, lead to the hymeneal altar the lovely and accomplished daughter of Colonel Clairlowe, of Marchmont, Devonshire. The bride elect has, it is well known, refused many splendid offers."

Harold rose from his chair, intending to leave the room; his hand rested on the handle, he felt it stir, threw it suddenly open, and encountered—Sarah.

"Harold! dear Harold! what is the matter?"

He struggled from her affectionate hold.

"Lord Dentnoris, I have no right to betray the secrets of another; I can only say that Miss Clairlowe and I shall both laugh heartily over the mistake, and with undisturbed friend-

liness forget it, or remember it, as accident brings other nonsense to divert our memories."

"What say you, Belton? my mind is filled with perplexities, strange and miserable; my bitterest enemy could scarce invent more suffering than I now endure; but she is yours?"

"Mine, Dentnoris? No! her heart and soul are, though not free, ——"

"Whose?" ejaculated the lover, fiercely; "and whence came this?" taking from his breast the morning treasure.

"That! was it in an old envelope?" inquired Sir William, calmly.

"It was."

"Then, pray restore it; it is my mother's property, although severed from Miss Clairlowe's beautiful head, on that night of adventure—the night we rested at Madame Cuvier's. I had no other thing to wrap it in, no other deposit but that recommended by my mother,

my waistcoat pocket, no other weapon to dissever it than my penknife.

"Mary was sleeping, and is to this hour ignorant of our theft. Lady Belton would be sorry to lose it, notwithstanding my carelessness. Ah! now I see—I wore the identical travelling waistcoat last night.

"Wilson had allowed the fire in my dressing-room to go out; and, as it was too damp and cold to dress without one, he introduced me to yours. The curl dropped, I suppose, from the pocket then."

"Enough," said Harold, with a look of almost tearful gratitude, extending his hand in fellowship.

"Well, gentlemen," said Sarah, "I saw you had mysteries to unravel, consequently retired, but really I can wait no longer. Harold, your colour has returned again; I congratulate you, for, indeed, just one minute ago, you were not

looking alive. See how you have detained me. Mary is going to read 'The Prisoner of Chillon' to me on the Terrace, while I finish the last chair-arm for you, Harold."

"Where is she, did you say, Sally?"

"Why, who invited you to meet us?" inquired his sister, merrily.

"Where is Mary? I pray you tell me," said Dentnoris.

"What a confusion of drollery! Mary, forsooth, after all your dignity! I cannot permit such familiarity. Miss Clairlowe," said the sweet girl, raising her little figure on tiptoe, and endeavouring to look grand, "is on the Terrace, waiting for your interrogations to cease; but if you really wish to find her, take this book, please—tell her, tell 'Mary'—remember, Harold, tell 'Mary,' I am afraid you have discarded all the dignity she disliked at once,

and fear she will not recognise you in your new character."

Harold Dentnoris had reached the Terrace ere Sarah's speech was half completed.

Miss Clairlowe was seated on a *prie dieu*, her white small fingers clasped upon her knees; a slight and graceful bend averted her full face, the profile only remained visible to the agitated lover. Mary was meditating sadly. The last look of the man she prized was still present to her mind, and the unpromising recollection weighed down every other hope beneath it. She tried to join in Sarah's mirth; she essayed a jest herself—mournful retribution for her care.

A sigh—not the breath breathed heavily—but a happy, quick sigh, from a young full heart, aroused her; and "Lord Dentnoris!" was again uttered in the accent of polite surprise.

She felt sorry to be alone with him—sorry to be alone with her heart's lord. Contradiction—Mary Clairlowe feared to betray the fondness yet sacred within the tabernacle of her inmost thoughts.

"Lord Dentnoris!" said she, willing to break the painful silence.

"Mary!" answered her lover; "Mary! I have been mistaken!"

His arm was accepted, and the two walked nearer to the sheltering trees.

"Mary!" again whispered Harold, as though the sound of the dear name gave him fresh life to feel and prize his happy fortune.

The blue and grateful eyes met his—no word was spoken, no vow was told—their hearts and souls commingled in that look—they breathed at last in blessed union.

"Mary!" but in a different tone, echoed through the walk.

"Colonel and Mrs. Clairlowe are here, and inquire for you, dear wife."

Harold's bosom thrilled—his brother's words were echoes of his own thoughts; silently he had said, a thousand times in that brief while, "Mary, my wife!"

"Sarah bade me fly to you and bring the tidings. I see now why she deputed me. You have been weeping, Mary."

"Not I," said the too happy girl; "but you go, Lord Dentnoris; I will follow soon."

The appellation chilled him for an instant; but he turned towards the speaker, and felt reassured—remembered their position one hour since, and acknowledged the natural justness of her formal address.

CHAPTER XIII.

Cheer thee! thy sister's heart and faith are high;
Our path is one—with thee I live and die!

MRS. HEMANS.

But thou, my bright one! thou shalt be
Where farewell sounds are o'er;
Thou, in the eyes thou lov'st, shall see
No fear of parting more.

RECORDS OF WOMAN.

Alack, 'tis he; why, he was met even now,
As mad as the vex'd sea, singing aloud.

LEAR.

"Norton Valence.

"DEAR MARIANNE,

"I feel that I am dying; Beverley will require some person more than my poor Charles near him, when it pleaseth One above to call

my spirit from this comfortable home. Can you be here without inconvenience by Wednesday? I shall scarcely last so long; yet my husband knows not the truth. He has been generous to me, Marianne. We have led a happy life together. His only love, his early lost Leila, and my heart's treasure, to whom I now depart, have been our joyful themes—the glad bond of union between us; and I leave my boy, my Edward's heir—a guardian in whose care he loves to be. Cherish him, dear Marianne; the orphan otherwise had been most desolate.

"God ever watch thee!

"ADA DENTNORIS."

Over the foregoing letter Lady Wilverton sat weeping, when Harold, with a countenance of supreme happiness, begged admittance to her room.

"Weeping, dear aunt! Let me know I beseech you, the source of grief?"

"You look happy, Harold; may I first learn the cause of your great gladness?" replied the lady, mournfully.

"I am the most blessed of men!"

"Ah, I see, Mary has consented."

"Not so; I merely feel assured she loves me, and have spoken to Colonel Clairlowe on the subject."

"Is it Harold Dentnoris who thus flatters himself?"

"Oh, lady, yes! and fly abashed from your presence," he exclaimed, "after uttering such a vain compliment to myself. Yet say why are your eyes so tearful? Indeed, Aunt Marianne, let me share your sorrow."

Harold turned away, saddened more at the delay the circumstance would occasion to his

marriage, than regret for the near approach of death to the dying.

Long and frequently he had marked the hectic burning of the hollow cheek, and feverish excitement of his uncle's wife, and knew it was best for her to die. Magnanimous in every position of life, the widow of Edward Bacon sunk beneath the effort to support a show of honest love for the happier Beverley Dentnoris. She felt almost tranquilly convinced, before her second marriage, that gratitude to the friend and guardian of her darling boy was but the harbinger of affection; that duty would become a pleasant thing, if borne for Charles' sake; love—a wife's unswerving fidelity—must ensue.

Alas! each pulse-throb was another's. She bore the pain, and gaily smiled; yet pined in broken-heartedness beneath the burthen of her

task. Yes! every sigh was faithless to the living. She learned, too late, to feel the scourge of a remorse, pure as it was secret.

On Wednesday night, Lady Wilverton and her nephew arrived at the Rectory. No sound greeted their approach—the spirit of the wife had passed from earth; the widower pointed to the silent clay; the orphan moaned.

They placed her tomb by Leila's, in the old church at Landsworth, and Norton Valence was forsaken.

The Rector once more tenanted the Manor House on the original terms, and his sister again became its beautiful hostess. Many winters had left few traces on her charmed brow—the exquisite perfection of womanhood remained peculiarly her own; veterans esteemed, and younger men admired her.

"This is an affronting production; yet, poor fellow, he is mad, evidently mad, beyond reco-

very," said Lord Dentnoris, one morning, to his aunt. "Ever since the visit of his mother to Bridgewater, we have heard nothing of him; I speak of Emmersly."

"A horrible idea this moment possesses me," observed Lady Wilverton. "It cannot be that he is the person alluded to in the 'Times' the other day. Mary said she heard the Colonel read it with a shuddering presentiment that such a fate must eventually terminate Sir Brook's career of wickedness. Yet, no! I tremble at the fear. Oh, Heaven! shield him from the dreadful judgment. It surely cannot be so."

"This letter is dated from India, but bears the post-marks of Lambeth and our village," replied Harold. "I do not ask you to read it; it is too terrible. Yet, Aunt Mariänne, you ever held powerful influence over him, and might do much to save a sinking man. It

is a dire office for you; but your soul can compass many an effort from which a weaker mind would shrink."

"May I not see the letter?" asked Lady Wilverton.

"It could answer no useful purpose," said Harold; "that which is essential must be speedily attempted."

"I ask no more; I will write to his mother and himself. If he be really mad, surely some lucid intervals may occur," rejoined the gentle woman.

Harold kissed the white brow, quitted the apartment, and, for the second time, perused the following communication:—

"To Harold, now Lord Dentnoris,

"My pen is filled with blackest ink; my heart, as dark, drags from its damp charnel-house the memory of past years. I fling them

back upon you—you planted my path with thorns—you hung thereon the blight of a whole life—Dentnoris, I abhor you! The sound curdles my life's blood—with your degrading name comes the demon of my shattered youth. I whisper Harold ——, fiend avaunt —Ida, Nellie, Gertrude, poor Toinette; yes, poor Toinette, she called herself—poor Toinette, how cold she was, and hungry. Out, vision! Now, I dance—see how I skip—there, 'tis gone; I summon it again. They tell me I am mad! Is Marianne dead? did I not see her cold and stiff! She is in that sea; I love to stand on the green sea's bank, and listen to its boisterous sounds; I struggle to out-sing its bursting, splashing song, and then they strike me, and I cry more fiercely. They bind me—ha! ha! I break my chains. I kissed that sea last night; the child looked on me—on me, its father. Will not the

monsters thank me—meet banquet for the large-eyed fish—her child. I shrieked at her; where is she? Mad! yes, I know it. How white and waxen it looked in the moon's light. No! 'twas a demon's eye lighted all i' the world then. The moon's light!—that was kept reserved, to watch pale Marianne's corpse! Marianne, you were mad to die! I would not have killed thee, save through Harold—fiend. Ah, no! 'twas Nellie's child, mauled and torn and dragged apart, by the beautiful mad creatures in the deep sea. Harold, in the moaning of the winter blast! in voices from the covered graves, and dank dew from unburied dead, I hear my Marianne shriek, 'Bid him depart;' I hear her cry, 'Another victim—three victims!' No! the babe's white arm holds her off. They tell me I am mad; am not—I am not.

"BROOK EMMERSLY."

* * * * *

"When will you visit Marchmont, aunt, dear aunt?" said George Dentnoris. "Now Uncle Beverley is so much better, shall we not see their dear faces soon again?"

"I shall certainly grow jealous of you, young sir, if you continue thus solicitous of gaining Miss Clairlowe's heart," retorted Harold.

"Miss Clairlowe! indeed, we are neither of us to 'miss' her more. I am glad you will be married soon, Harold—next Thursday week; how very near. Hurrah!" and the brothers separated—

Lord Dentnoris to fill pages with a tale oft told, and George to bid their orphan friend accompany him in his ride.

CHAPTER XIV.

The bride comes forth! no more her tears are falling,
To leave the chamber of her infant years;
Kind voices from a distant home are calling—
She comes like day-spring—she hath done with tears.

Once, when I looked along the laughing earth,
Up the blue heavens, and through the middle air,
Joyfully ringing with the skylark's song,
I wept! and thought how sad for one so young
To bid farewell to so much happiness.

WILSON.

"INDEED, Mamma, I have not wept, my eyes are heavy only with watching for the break of day. Sorrowful my waking hours have been, dear mother, for all my thoughts are filled with that one recollection—'I must leave you.'

Even happiness like mine cannot, cannot lessen that keen memory. Nay, do not chide me, my sweet mother; Harold would not love me if I felt not sadness in leaving you and my dear father. All these things—look upon them, mother mine—all these will be Mary Clairlowe's no more!"

"But they will still, will ever be the property of Mary Dentnoris," said the fond old lady.

A vivid blush mantled the young bride's cheek, at this allusion to her husband's name, and silence succeeded.

Mrs. Clairlowe had sought her daughter with the morning's dawn, proposing to herself the delight of watching her in peaceful slumber once again, ere she passed the sacred rubicon, and changed the hopes and fears of girlhood for the anxious cares, and the intense devotion of "a wife."

Miss Clairlowe was already sitting at her window, when her mother entered. Lodwick and the Colonel soon joined them. Not a tear was shed except the holy tear of too much joy.

Colonel Clairlowe looked upon his "loveliest one," the last time he might call her his own, all his own. The brother blessed her with his heartiest prayer, and mused on Harold's fortune to win that sister. The mother! oh, first and last, and deepest, was her fear, her hope, her love.

In the wedding preparations more had been done to gratify the happy tenants on the estate than to enrich the bridal cortège, yet was it a goodly sight to see; and, though they could not pledge the solemn vow at the altar where first their footsteps met, it was determined that Landsworth should be the temple honoured by their first visit on a return to England.

And Harold Dentnoris at last stood by that beloved girl—a few moments only to elapse ere he would clasp her to his breast, his wife for ever.

The words were uttered, and the ring bestowed; the merry peal rang forth; the *Guerdon* of their trials was awarded, and their earthly *Goal* won.

With almost jealous anxiety, the father watched the small white hand as it inscribed his name! it was her resignation of it; he sighed, and then the old man wept.

Sir William Belton gave his arm to Lady Wilverton, and passed onwards to the carriages.

"Oh, Lady Wilverton," said he, scarce audibly, "would that your heart could relent—would that the devotion of years might be repaid with hope! Oh, Heaven! you know not my deep love for you. Forgive, and do

not rebuke me; I see by your manner I have offended. Do not misunderstand me; I appreciate your heart, your goodness. Pardon my transgression—I have trampled on my promise, given though long before I learned to watch you, Lady Wilverton, and mark your every thought, and see no trait but those Heaven values and human nature loves. You cannot condemn me, dear lady. I have, by neither sign nor word, spoken of my love; yet I reproach myself, and would have qualified my forbearance with approval rather than fly your presence, and deprecate my selfish, uncontrollable affection. I see Lord Herberton waits for you. May the choicest of Heaven's blessings be thine, thine for ever! We meet, but the great gulf lies between."

"Happy Mary!" said Sarah Denthorne; "who but her could have won Harold. Looked

she not beautiful!" continued she, addressing Percy Loder.

"Heavenly!" was the warm response.

It breathed his last longing sigh; and many a dreary month succeeded till, schooled and overcome, the memory of a something brighter that had been and passed was the only ray existing of his former love.

In the wife of Dentnoris he welcomed a new friend, and in that friendliness he lived and died.

One week after the marriage, Lady Wilverton received a letter of farewell from Sir William Belton:—

"I do not quit Europe, dear Lady Wilverton, and every scene connected with my hopeless aspirations, in any belief that time may diminish or change my feelings. It is only

that, perchance, far from you—distant from the sound of your praises—remote from those who love you—I may teach myself to conceal emotions reasonably annoying to you. My health is impaired, which proves sufficient cause for thus absenting myself. Your summons to return alone can be obeyed. Say not again, your years outnumber mine—so do your virtues! Say no more that I am young, and require alone the patience of endurance for a while, to rest my heart beside a fitter shrine. The dispensations from the only other, whence I learned my love for you, already bow me down. It is the living gods! Dearest Lady Wilverton, I have seen yourself, and, next to Heaven, love you; nor will it be imputed sin to breathe, with my latest sigh, the remembrance of my tenderness.

"God bless you.

"William Belton."

"He merited a better fate," said Lady Wilverton, pondering sadly over the incidents of the past week.

It had brought unequal happiness and misery; yet He who reads our souls makes truthful record of their strength to suffer and receive. "Bless you, He will, dear Sir William, and render you that happiness ten thousand fold, which I only seem to have a thought towards withholding. Taunton, come to my dreams! and say you long for our reunion."

And again the widow and the widower lived tranquilly at Landsworth.

Wrapt in a cloud of glorious dreams
 She breathes and moves along,
Pining for those bright bowers and streams
 Where her beloved is gone.

FINIS.

LONDON:
SAVILL AND EDWARDS, PRINTERS,
4, CHANDOS STREET.